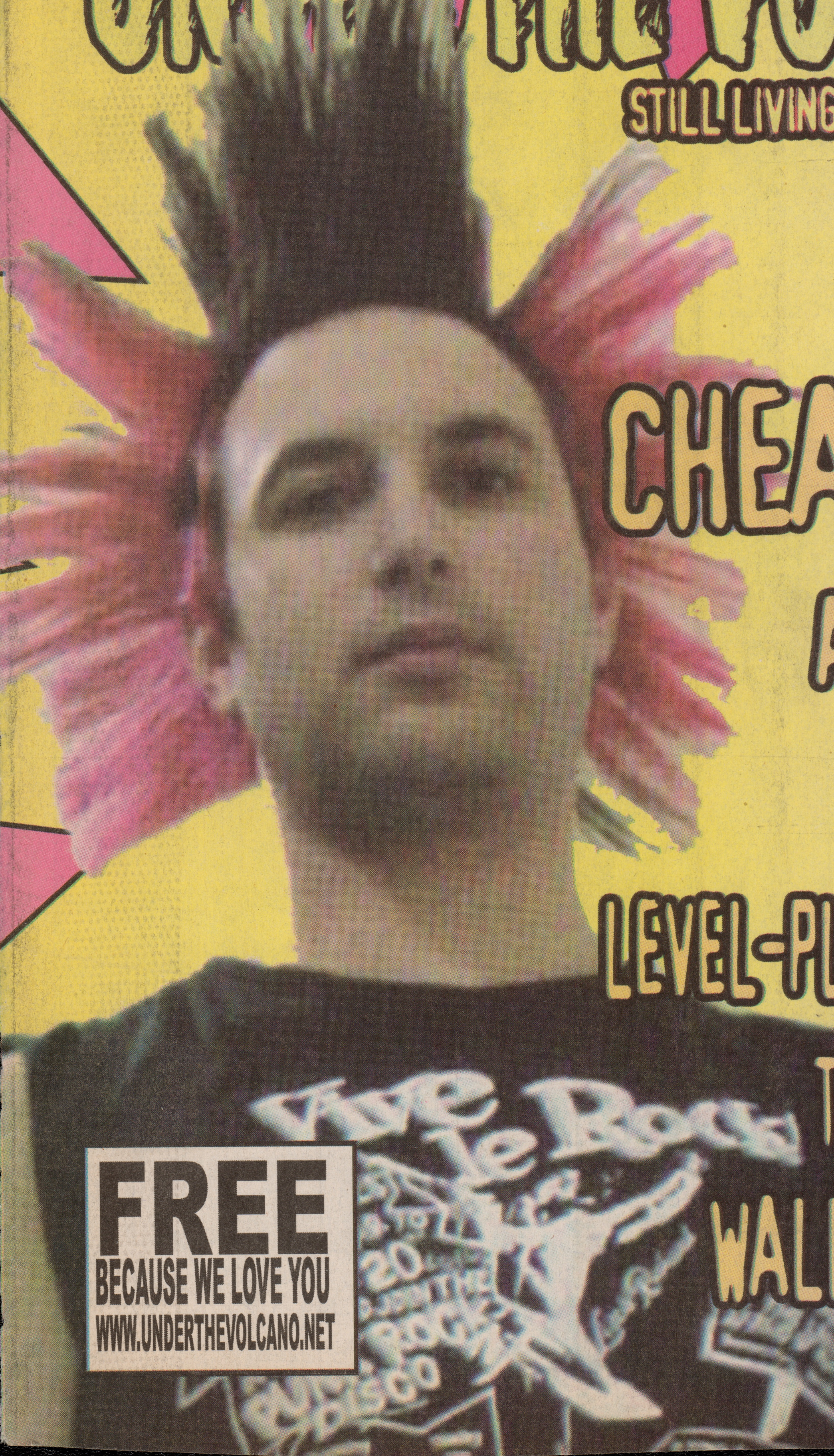
UNDER THE VOLCANO

STILL LIVING UNDER A PUNK ROCK

#83



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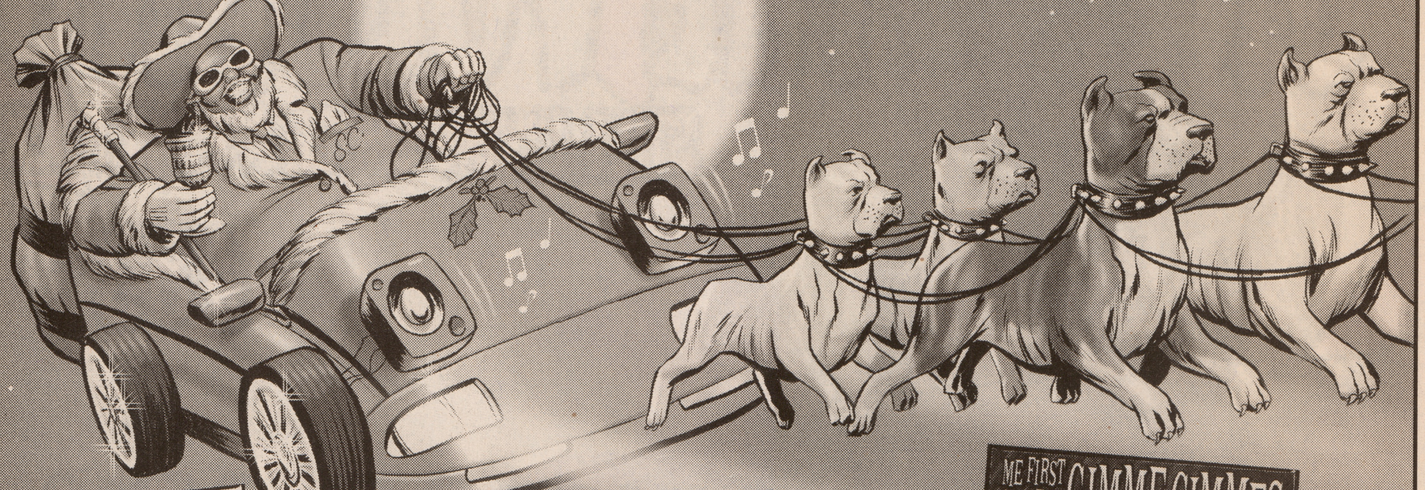

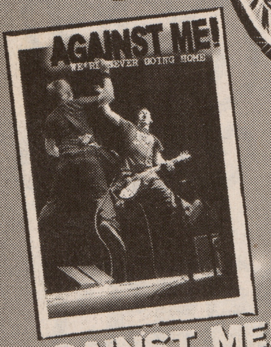
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WE'RE NEVER GOING HOME

AGAINST ME!
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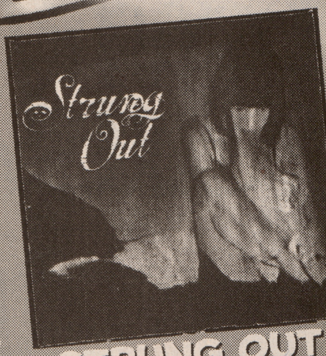

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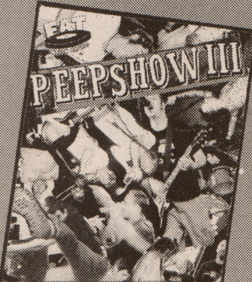
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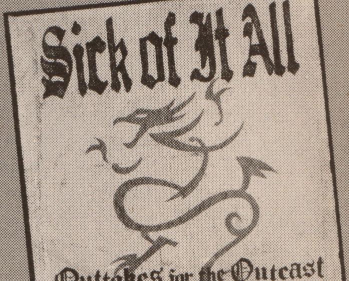
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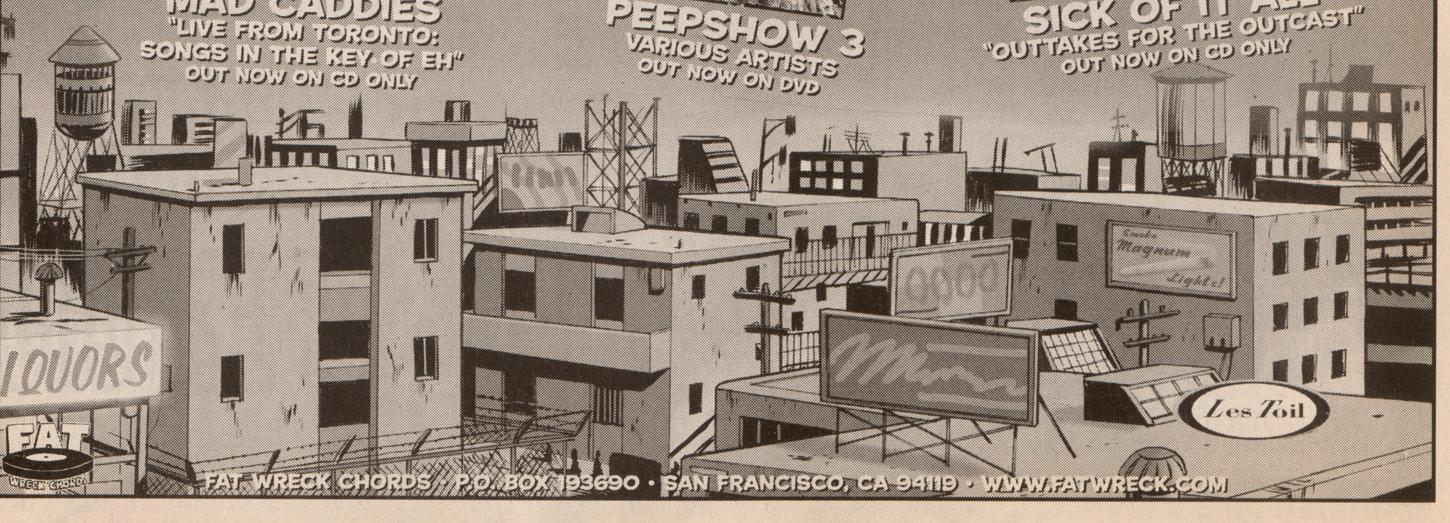
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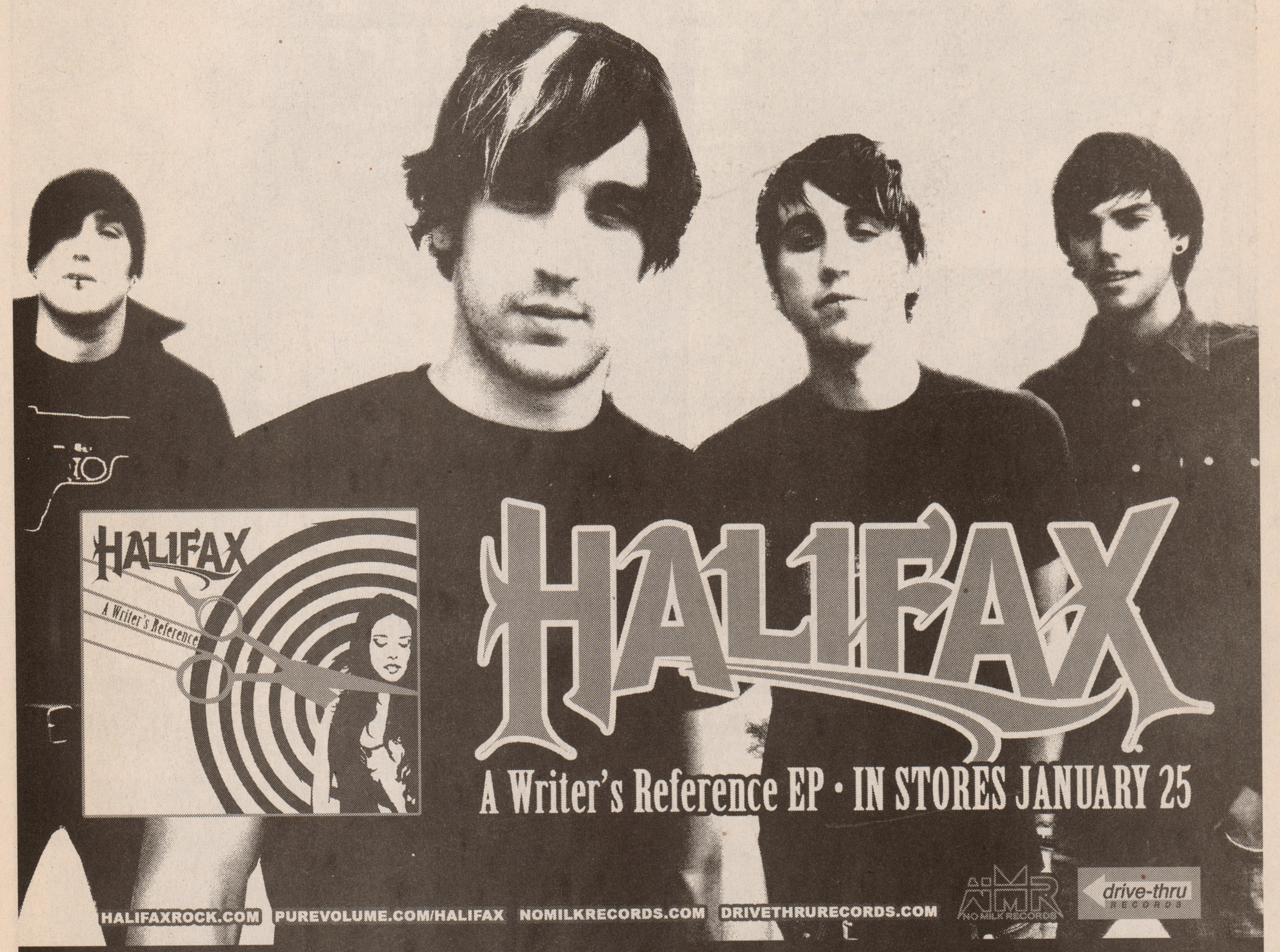
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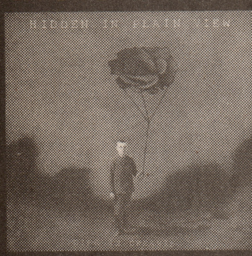
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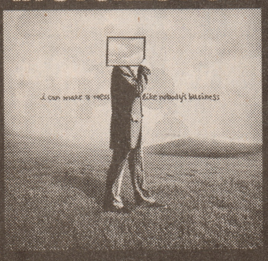
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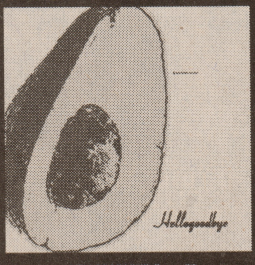
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From the Editor

Rich Black

If you could read my mind....

it wasn't just a computer meltdown...it was more like an explosion...

have you considered the possibility you could be retarded? i'm serious.

michel bernanos must've liked jazz...

BUSH? NO WAY!

unfortunately, you're a lyin' piece of shit.

YOU TWO ASSHOLES DESERVE EACH OTHER!

am I too nice?

wait...if you just said what I think you said, yes, i'd like that very much!

IT WAS AS NICE AS A FUNERAL COULD BE...

That's great. Now where's my fuckin' money?

I've given you hundreds of magazines over the last year, but I owe YOU money? How can that POSSIBLY be?

BEER, PLEASE!

Are you an asshole to EVERYONE, or just ME?

HEY PETE! I'M GLAD YOU'RE DOING WELL!

You ate paint chips as a kid? Naaaaaw...

WHY IS EVERYONE FUCKING UP?

MORE BEER, PLEASE!

Good riddance to 2004!

WANNA SEND US AN INTERVIEW?

Under the Volcano is looking for high-quality interviews to publish. There is NO PAY involved. We like many genres of music, but Punk and Hardcore are generally what set our loins on fire, and we're ONLY interested in bands that have a CD available through national distributors. Email us first about your interview ideas. We'll require hearing the band first of course, and have some simple guidelines once you get the go-ahead. Remember, there are no guarantees—we're kind of dicks about the right "mix" of bands for a particular issue, and hafta REALLY like what a band is doing to run a feature. Please DON'T approach us about features on bands from Long Island, as we already have 'em covered.

INTERNSHIPS

Under the Volcano is always looking for bright, motivated, and slightly masochistic people to create and or/fill unrewarding, unglamourous, non-paying intern positions (we are NOT looking for writers) in exchange for college credit! English, Communications or Marketing majors are encouraged to apply, and you DON'T have to live on Long Island. If ya wanna get involved, email a proposal detailing STEP BY STEP ideas for new programs or projects (including how you intend to implement them) or however else you'd like to contribute to boss@underthevolcano.net with "INTERNS" in the subject header. Please also include a 300 word statement explaining WHY ya wanna work with *Under the Volcano*, along with your contact info.

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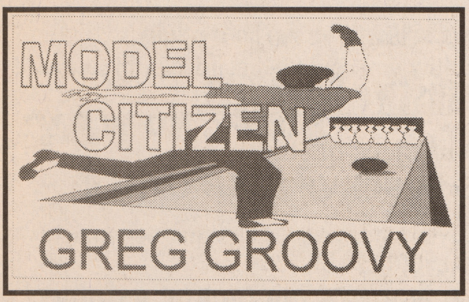
Columns



I'm sick of being sick and tired of being tired. This is one of the phrases I've been tossing around for a couple of years. I heard something similar to this on the radio and just laughed. It's one of the few times that cheesy pop said something which remotely mirrored how I felt. But that was then. I definitely feel that this computer makes me sick with all the fucking anxiety that viruses, worms and ID theft bring. I can't deal with it... the stomachaches, the migraines, and the diarrhea. We're talking really making me sick folks, so it's quickly working it's way out of my life.

I've been trying to weed out a lot of things have been bringing misery into the garden. I'm down to the one or two things remaining that I haven't changed, and like g\crabgrass, it's that shit that you along to linger around that'll come creeping back and ruin you. I've got loads of stuff that need to get tossed. There are shelves full of bad nostalgia and good nostalgia. I've got piles of remnants from punk years past. There are also some things that are left over from this mental battle or that soul decay. I honestly don't even know what purpose they serve anymore. So, they too will end up in some used CD bins, goodwill stashes and yep… even in the recycled paper trash. I've been there, I've done it. The people that I cared about and who gave two shits about me were there with me. Those who didn't weren't, so latching onto this stuff really serves no purpose anymore. It's over and done with. No one cares anymore, so deal with it. Which is exactly what I intend to do.

I can admit that I'm not hip anymore, and with all the bullshit that "hip-ness" brings I don't really care for it. My days really were numbered when I stopped reviewing CDs. My brain wouldn't allow it any more; I couldn't critique other people's stuff while I sat around with a beer in my hand doing nothing. The funny thing that happened, is when I did stop writing reviews and no longer had some sort of function to offer musicians, my phone stopped ringing. That's okay though; I just wish they would've been more straightforward from the get go. If someone said, "Listen, Groovy, as long as you supply us with your little service you're down. If you don't, you're finished." I'd understand that completely. Unfortunately, being straight up is one of those things we sing about and aspire to be rather than achieve. Maybe in the next world.

If I were to review a CD today, the only thing that I've been giving a lot of time and devotion to is *Awakened Mind System* by Dr. Jeffrey Thompson. Which really isn't going to get a lot of our readers' blood pumping, but I think the intention is to do the exact opposite. It helps get you to a state of mental alertness while maintaining a relaxed being. The other discs that have been getting some heavy rotation in my player as of late are nature sounds; they help balance out the bad energy that I radiate after being doused with the stuff during the work day.

I said a few years back that America would be a fucking beautiful place to live if a 110 story building collapsed on a daily basis. I see all the same old selfishness and greed that I had seen on September 10. It's just really sad.

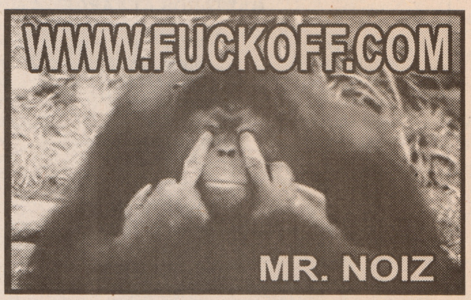
I guess if there's anything positive to come from this, it's the fact that I'm not playing into it any more. No more fists first, mind second. Like I said, I'm tired of this existence. I'm tired of the whole hard core creed that has been about flaunting iron and asphalt. These are two things that can be washed away when the wind blows a little rough and the water creeps further ashore. So what good are they really?

The anxiety attacks have come to a screeching halt. The only time I feel panic or sick is when I'm dealing with this electronic instrument. I know there are a lot of you who could argue that there are so many positives to being online and fully wired. I can argue that my own mental situation and physical state intertwined with a modem is a recipe for disaster. So, I've been doing something rather revolutionary by, get this: staying offline. Why read a weather report when you can go to the beach and experience it first hand?

I went to the bookstore, they didn't have the book I was looking for. So I had them order it. I didn't have to pay for shipping or shell out more money for a speedy delivery. Holy shit.

So, with the computer on the out, I started taking Chi Kung. Funny thing is, I'm down there two nights a week with Eric the Red and Krog from the ol' Slopkrog shows. Lately we've really been talking it up to all the punks and skins that will listen. We're probably annoying the shit out of people, but when you've found something that consists of simple exercises and you immediately feel a physical change from them, it's hard not to be excited. I used to feel like I had cement lungs and ankles. That feeling was gone the first week. I've felt really, really good ever since. I seriously owe a lot to Krog for finding out about this stuff. Not to mention that I've known Eric since I was 14 years old; we've seen a lot of the good and bad that each other possesses, and at this point it's is actually a nice experience to share. We're trying to get ol' Jon T. down so the original '87 crew can be together and supporting one another, like the old days.

Another exciting thing to land in my lap while all this has been going down was a great book by Noah Levine called *Dharma Punx*. Things work in mysterious ways, and to have read this book at this current time has really given me even more confidence that I'm on the right path. *Dharma Punx* documents Levine's life trials and tribulations. The back of it states, "an unconventional journey from Gen X Punk to Buddhist teacher," which probably does it more justice than me trying to explain it...though, if you've read my columns before, you know I've never liked that whole Gen X thing (though Sigue Sigue Sputnik were okay—yuck yuck). It's been a really helpful read. So, if any of the above makes any sense to you and you empathize with what I've been feeling as of late, definitely check it out.



Let's face it:.Sports aren't really Punk Rock, but I've been such a whore for the NFL lately. It's nine weeks into the season, and as much as I miss hockey, this is filling a void. I am actually kind of pissed at myself for losing interest in both hockey and football when I was 14. I was more interested in music, But, in the past few years, both have caught my interest again big time. Check out www.nflhistoryguide.com for a bit of catch up on NFL history. Want help cheating your co-workers out of your office pool money? Check out www.mrnfl.com .

If I haven't bored you (as if anyone else reads this other than Rich) check out Ron Jeremy's Blog (allegedly) www.livejournal.com/users/le_hedgehog ... it could be someone impersonating the hedgehog or maybe not, but either way it does make for interesting reading. Or, if you feel like aiming a bow and arrow at someone, check out www.xeron.org/cosas/bowman/bowmanf.htmlfor some great time-killing.

LIP

KEITH THOMSON

POST ELECTION DEPRESSION

There is a universal malaise pervading New York City. It's as if everyone you know has just had a difficult family situation that they just don't want to talk about. The local bar is full, not with comissorators or dissident conspiracy theorists, but lined with shallow heads, raising glasses.

The Liberal stronghold of The US has been defeated by its own proud self -proclamations. We, as New Yorkers, hold high the value of our intellectualism and our liberal tolerance. These values have written history, as we been the microcosm for of the larger model of democracy, "The Great American Experiment." We've been the bearers of the brunt, suffering the 9/11 attacks, anthrax in our mail, an immediately deteriorated economy, the grueling after effects of all of this and yet, yet we survive. We survive by being united in our humanity, undivided by religion, philosophy or class.

And for these virtues…we've been chastised, whored and...

Our detached president stood on the mound at Ground Zero, bullhorn in hand, drawing from our bleeding heart to create his marketable god-warrior portrait. The promised financial aid never arrived, but still our pace kept step. They brought their convention to town, much to our chagrin. "Leave us! Let us be! We don't agree!" But again, they used our wounds to manipulate the emotions of the television mass from lands far away. Trucked and bused from event to event, their politicians and pundits never even saw our city or met our people or breathed our air..

Adding insult to injury, as we hobbled along, but proud of our own self-sufficiency, they marred our very name, turning the word "Liberal" into pornography and preying on intellectual insecurities en-masse, then suggesting we were the exclusionary mindset by tagging an "elite" on the end. (This, by those who are outplayed by no one in Elitism).

I think most people I associate with were involved in some way, whether it was marching in the RNC protest rallies, coordinating fundraisers, door-to-door volunteerism or monetary donation, people were active. We have had our beliefs questioned, our lifestyles on trial and our hearts assailable. We were invested in the outcome. Our hope for the future was at stake.

Tuesday evening, as the red states dominated the screen, the barroom was almost still. I don't believe the election results are truthful. It doesn't make sense that the Republicans lost the popular vote in 2000 and that there were more voters this time—which experts assume leans toward the Democrats—and that the exit polls showed a distinct advantage toward Kerry, and then the popular vote going the other way. The obvious theory is that the Republican regime fixed the new, untested voting machines so that Bush would not only win the electoral college, but also the popular vote, giving his victory legitimacy. This could be supported by reports of voter fraud at many locations, notably in Ohio, Florida and New Mexico.

But what's done is done. We're not going to go back. This is how it's going to stand. With the potential appointment of up to four new Supreme Court justices, the tone of this country is set for the next decade. We are moving toward a self- righteous christio-corporate society, one that cultivates a culture of ignorance and propagates a culture of greed, one doesn't have my needs and interests on the agenda.

I have spent my entire adult life trying to carve out a living in doing what I believe in, the power of art, music and theater as social tools to unite, to teach and to learn, without having to live as a uniform drone riding the nine to five train, always having a vision of the future when all my sweat has accrued equity and allowed a certain sense of security, in money, in career and maybe even with a family, but right now my hope is on ice…and it tastes like whisky.

THROUGH A GRRL'S EYES

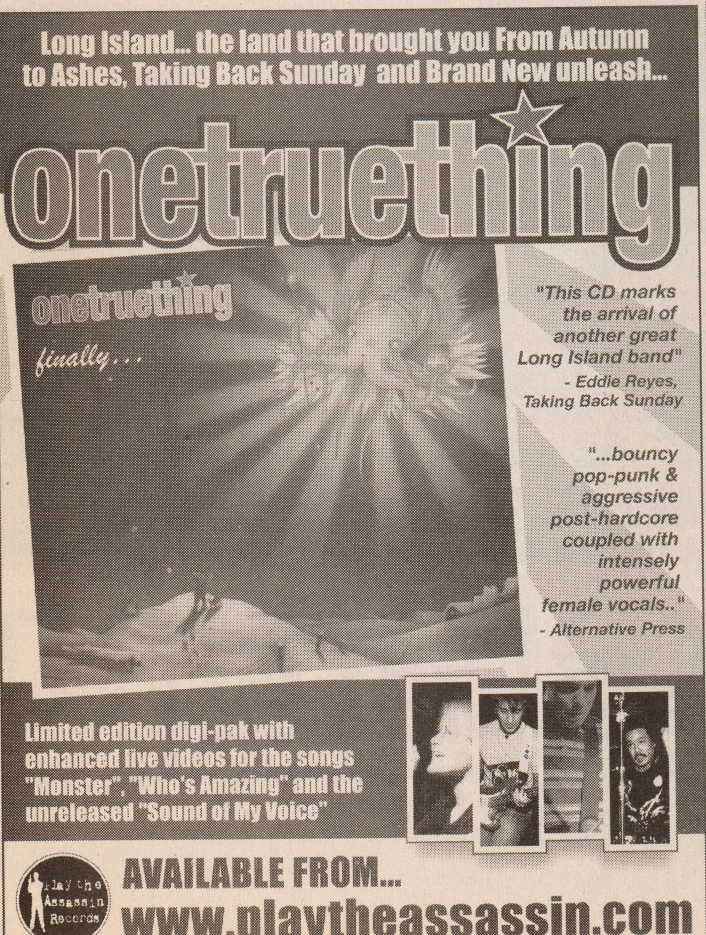
KELLIE BYH

I can remember a time where I hardly let anything bother me, when I just let most things go and didn't really worry about them. I guess in some aspects that was a good way of living, but also a bad way of living. These days I feel like there's not one thing I let slip by without analyzing it until there isn't anything left of it. Maybe it's from years of hidden deception from people I thought I knew back and front, or maybe it's just me going completely crazy.

Take relationships, for example. When I was younger, they were so easy and simple but I don't know what I was thinking then. Not saying they aren't wonderful and amazing now, but they're so complicated, frustrating ...but that adds to what makes them so great. I believe it's the stakes of a relationship that add to its appeal, even if nobody can see how high the stakes can be. Hopefully, at least one of you will agree.

Let's take my relationship for example. There have been so many times where I should have let certain things just go and not have made a big deal out of them, but then that's where the fight comes out in me and I turn into the stubborn and mean person that nobody wants to deal with. If I was an outsider, I would probably hate me when I become like that. I'm not quite sure when I turned into this person or how I developed this quality, but it's not a very flattering one. I guess the new personality just comes with a serious relationship. In becoming this new type of person, I've come to realize something I believe is true: If you are n't passionate, and if you don't put your all into a relationship (even the fighting) then you really don't have something special. Most people might think I'm trying to make excuses for my bad temper, but maybe I get this way because I really am in love, and with love comes passion—even passion through anger.

Normally I don't like to get this personal, but I'm just hoping that maybe some of you can turn around and realize that this why some of you may get so mad or nitpick about everything in a relationship, or with family, or with friends—it just may be because you really love these people and they deserve the best of you—and sometimes the worst of you. Even though that may sound like a shitty thing to say, in retrospect would you rather have someone give their ALL, or just a measly 10%?



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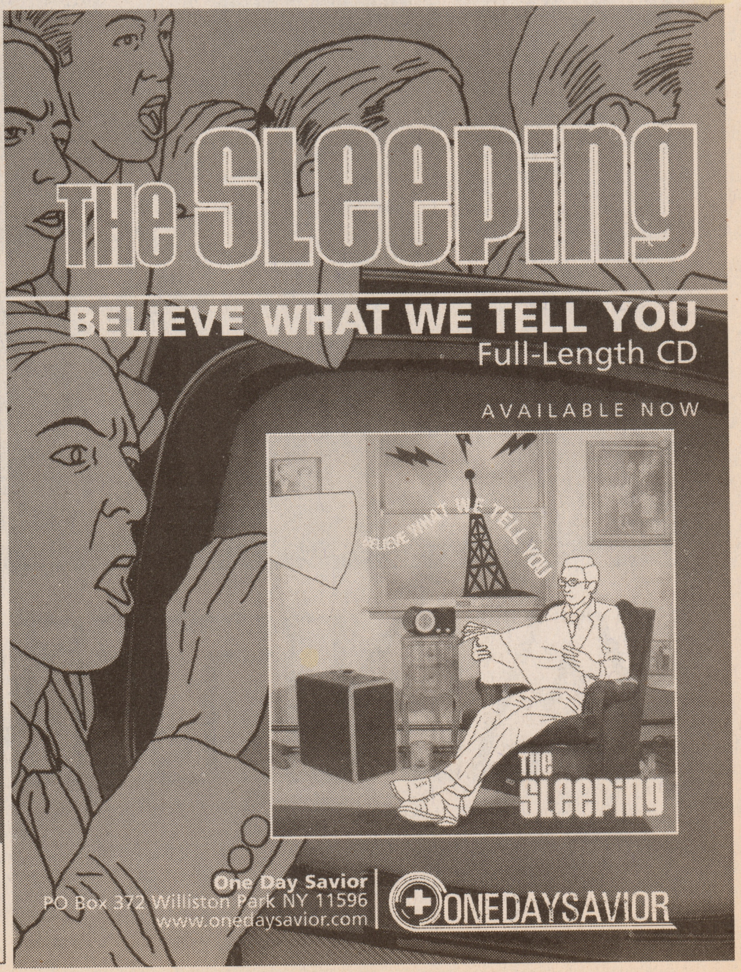

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Whether you love 'em or hate 'em, ANTiSEEN is a boisterous, rowdy, brawny, and menacing force to be reckoned with. For the past 20 years, the Boys from Brutalsville have been unleashing a merciless torrent of extreme Southern-bred Rock 'n' Roll that can best be described as an unruly and uncivilized musical barroom brawl. The blood, the rage, the mayhem, and the loud, unrelenting vileness... all notorious components of a typical ANTiSEEN performance... definitely not for the faint at heart nor for spineless, lily-livered crusaders of the new age. ANTiSEEN do it their way, abiding by nobody else's rules, obliterating everything in their path, and taking no prisoners whatsoever. Theirs is a scandalously abrasive sound that appeals to heathens, scoundrels, and mangy, dirty dogs alike. Since I'm all of the above combined into one drunken and disheveled entity, I quite naturally savor the type of demented, wild-eyed destructo noise that madly simmers and boils from ANTiSEEN's hellfire-laden pores on the band's latest TKO release, Badwill Ambassadors. So it is with supreme pride and pleasure that I'm able to introduce to you the one and only wild man extraordinaire himself, ANTiSEEN's rabid mad-dog vocalist, Mr. Jeff Clayton. Read on if you dare, kiddies!

ANTiSEEN

ROGER MOSER, JR.

Under the Volcano: Inquiring minds everywhere would like to know: what in thundering tarnation is an ANTiSEEN?

Jeff Clayton: A very clever mis-spelling of anti scene. Meaning: we are against any SCENE you can throw at us. Of course as we get a wee bit older, being against a scene is less important, and we tend to just be against everything, period. Even if deep down inside we indeed are NOT against this, that, or the other, we'll say we are, just to make someone feel bad.

UTV: ANTiSEEN has been mauling the eardrums of the blood-thirsty masses for 20 years now. What have been some of the band's highest highs and lowest lows?

Jeff Clayton: Highest highs would be the first time we played Europe to audiences that seemed to know who we were. Backing GG Allin. Having a childhood hero like Michael Bruce from the Alice Cooper Group play on one of our records. Getting to open for the Ramones several times. Reading all our bad reviews. Getting to meet a lot of really good people over the years, from all over the world. Putting out the book *Destructo Maximus*. Actually making it to our 20 year anniversary show. Having great bands tell us we were an influence on them.

My response to all the whiny mall brats and PC tree-huggers who think ANTiSEEN is nothing more than a marauding bunch of narrow-minded country-bumpkin rednecks is: I DON'T GIVE A FUCK WHAT YOU DIAPER-EATING PISS ANTS THINK!

Lowest lows would be losing some of our band members--even though it always seems for the best later. Never getting filthy rich. Having people think the only thing we ever did was back GG Allin. Having shitty bands tell us we were an influence on them.

UTV: Since ANTiSEEN is one of the genre's mostly blatantly brutal participants, how would you define Scum Rock?

Jeff Clayton: Scum Rock is something that kinda got tagged on us without our consent. I know MOST Scum Rock bands just sing about sexual deviancy and bowl movements; we've covered a few more subjects than that. I guess that may have come from being associated with the Confederacy of Scum.

UTV: For those uninformed ignoramuses amongst the peanut gallery who don't know any better, what exactly is the Confederacy of Scum? And who are its core members?

Jeff Clayton: Funny you should mention that. It's just a group of bands who have a lot of the same interests and attitudes, that get together once a year for a big two day show in a different city each time. The core members would be us along with Rancid Vat, Limecell, The Tunnel Rats, Before I Hang and Cocknoose, which also features the head honcho of the whole shabang, Thee Widowmaker.

UTV: In the savage wild-eyed world of ANTiSEEN, whiskey, Rock n' Roll, shotguns, and wrestling all seem to go hand in hand. From which of the aforementioned necessities do you draw the most inspiration? And why?

Jeff Clayton: Wrestling. We've watched it ever since we were kids, and it's where we learned about showmanship, fashion, and generally putting yourself "over." The first time I ever witnessed "the crimson mask"--a bloody face of a wrestler for those who have no idea--it had quite an impact on me. Later on came the influence from the likes of Alice Cooper, Black Oak, Grand Funk and Slade...even later, the Ramones, Sex Pistols and the Clash. Whiskey and shotguns are just necessities that everyone should have.

UTV: Although I'll probably catch a whole world of flak from the holier-than-thou punk element, I'm an admitted Lynyrd Skynyrd fan from way back when. I have their first seven albums on vinyl, and I consider *On the Hunt* one of the most kick-ass Rock n' Roll songs ever recorded. Since ANTiSEEN has tackled a couple of Skynyrd tunes in the past, I'm wondering what your favorite Skynyrd album is, and how do you see that particular band as an influence on what you and the rest of the ANTiSEEN crew have done?

Jeff Clayton: Well to start....what the holier than thou punk element thinks should be the very least of your worries, if you even let it bother you at all. I don't see how anyone who likes Rock music can't appreciate Lynyrd Skynyrd. Musically they were just a part of our growing up. I reckon we just never thought much about it. Though ANTiSEEN never really took much from them on the musical side, I think their boldness about being southern and not being ashamed of it could be the biggest influence we got from them.

UTV: In all fairness, though, ANTiSEEN has also covered the Ramones and several other notoriously influential Punk bands during the past few years. So what is your response to all the whiny mall brats and PC tree-huggers who think ANTiSEEN is nothing more than a marauding bunch of narrow-minded country-bumpkin rednecks? For the record, I think y'all grandly rock--and I'm not just saying that to avoid a king-sized, ANTiSEEN-style ass whuppin' either!

Jeff Clayton: My response to all the whiny mall brats and PC tree-huggers who think ANTiSEEN is nothing more than a marauding bunch of narrow-minded country-bumpkin rednecks is: I DON'T GIVE A FUCK WHAT YOU DIAPER-EATING PISS ANTS THINK!

If ANY of 'em used those brains they claim to have, they'd learn to look past the surface of things before making their ever-so-important judgement. Those types miss out on some really good stuff because of the label put on things. But all of 'em seem to know about Skrewdriver....wonder why? Hmmmmmmmm...

UTV: The Confederate flag is all-at-once feared, misinterpreted, revered, vilified, and respected. It's seen as both a beautiful symbol of Southern pride and heritage, and as an oppressive banner of hatred and racism. What is your perspective on this age-old topic of debate, Mr. JC? And what exactly does the "stars and bars" represent to you?

Jeff Clayton: Well, as you said, it's an age old topic of debate...a tired debate if you ask me. I don't think either side of that debate will EVER see the other's side, no matter what. To me, it simply represents being Southern and rebellion. Remember, the Civil War was fought over States' Rights, not slavery as many want to believe. I don't understand why it has the bad rap it gets; I mean, a rebel flag wasn't flying on the slave ships that came from Africa to the States, to the best of my knowledge....I'm thinking it was the stars and stripes, but hey, no one in my family was ever rich enough to own slaves, so I have no guilt about any of that whatsoever.

UTV: What pisses you off the most in this godforsaken garbage receptacle of life? And how would you like to personally alleviate the cause of your anger?

Jeff Clayton: Damn. There was a time when I could have given you a list so long that you wouldn't have enough space to print it all, but nowadays I seem to just get pissed at normal shit....slow drivers, bible thumpers, goths, punks, malls, bands that take themselves too serious, internet critics, message boards, MTV, Rap, Hip Hop, wiggers, Emo, door to door salesmen, work, bills, insurance companies, affirmative action, doctors, lawyers, cashiers at stores...DAMN, I do still have a pretty good list! In reality, I just TRY to avoid any of these--and many more--things ...as hard as that may be. In my mind, I wish I could turn into Ghidorah and smash them!

UTV: Why do you inflict so much violence upon yourself during a typical ANTiSEEN performance? A friend of mine has foolishly suggested that the blood oozing from your pores is fake, but I say "hogwash!" Do you ever worry that you might bleed to fuckin' death onstage before the eyes of your zealous fans? What medical measures--if any--are taken to insure that this won't happen?

Jeff Clayton: Oh yeah--that's another thing that pisses me off, people thinking it's fake. Fake blood would not be honest. There have only been a few times in our career that I've actually been in what I would consider "serious" trouble as far as my stage antics went. I spent eight hours in a hospital waiting room once in Austin, Texas just to get stitched up. After that, I decided I'd just try to do it myself if it comes to that. I've not been stitched up since 1992, I think. I've had many a cut that SHOULD have been stitched, but the hassle of going to the hospital and dealing with all that nonsense plus the costs just ain't worth it. I'd rather have the scar anyway. I travel with a pretty good supply of bandages and medicines for such events. I get cut on my legs and hands a lot, too. I don't let anyone get on the stage if I'm bleeding; if by chance they get by Joe [Young, guitar] or Doug [Canipe, bass] they usually get met with a bloody fist by the time they get to me.

UTV: Speaking of blood, mayhem, and carnage, ANTiSEEN recorded an album with GG Allin a few years back. What was it like hanging out with the undisputed King of Scum? And did he ever fling any poop at you or the other ANTiSEEN boys?

Jeff Clayton: GG was a real pro when it came to getting what he was trying to get in the studio. He was a really cool person to hang around with outside the madhouse that was his public life. He never did fling any poop on or toward us. I did do background vocals on stage for the Murder Junkies a few times, and when GG took "The Dump" it was very difficult to stay up there!

UTV: If you could get away with murder, who would you deem a worthy victim? Why?

Jeff Clayton: Michael Moore, Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson, Anna Nichole Smith, Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein--and maybe 30 or 40 more that I cant think of right now--because they make me sick, and I think my planet would be better without them. Maybe leave a few of 'em so I could still have something to complain about.

UTV: How would you most like to be remembered by your fans? And your family and friends?

Jeff Clayton: I hope my fans will remember me as a crazy sumbitch who could put on a damned good show and keep them entertained for years. I hope my friends remember me as someone who was trustworthy and a good friend, and I hope my family remembers me as a husband and father who tried all he could to see that his family had all they needed and felt safe with me, and hopefully led by some good examples along the way.

UTV: What would you consider a fitting epitaph for the menacingly enigmatic Jeff Clayton upon exiting this planetary mass of molecular confusion?

Jeff Clayton: "'bout time they lowered that sumbitch in the ground!"

UTV: Closing on a more positive note, what does the future hold for ANTiSEEN? And do you foresee the band raucously stirring up a storm for another 20 years?

Jeff Clayton: The future for the band...we'll see many a release coming out...here is the list: *Badwill Ambassadors* LP/CD, our new studio album, *One Live SonofABitch and A Hell of A Lot More* triple disc set with two live CDs and one full-length DVD, split singles with Electric Frankenstein and Hammerlock. Hopefully more live shows on the West Coast and some of the Midwest that we've not been to in a while. As for how much longer we'll keep ANTiSEEN alive....well, I hoped I'd reach 20 years. Now I hope we'll make it to 25. After that....who knows? X

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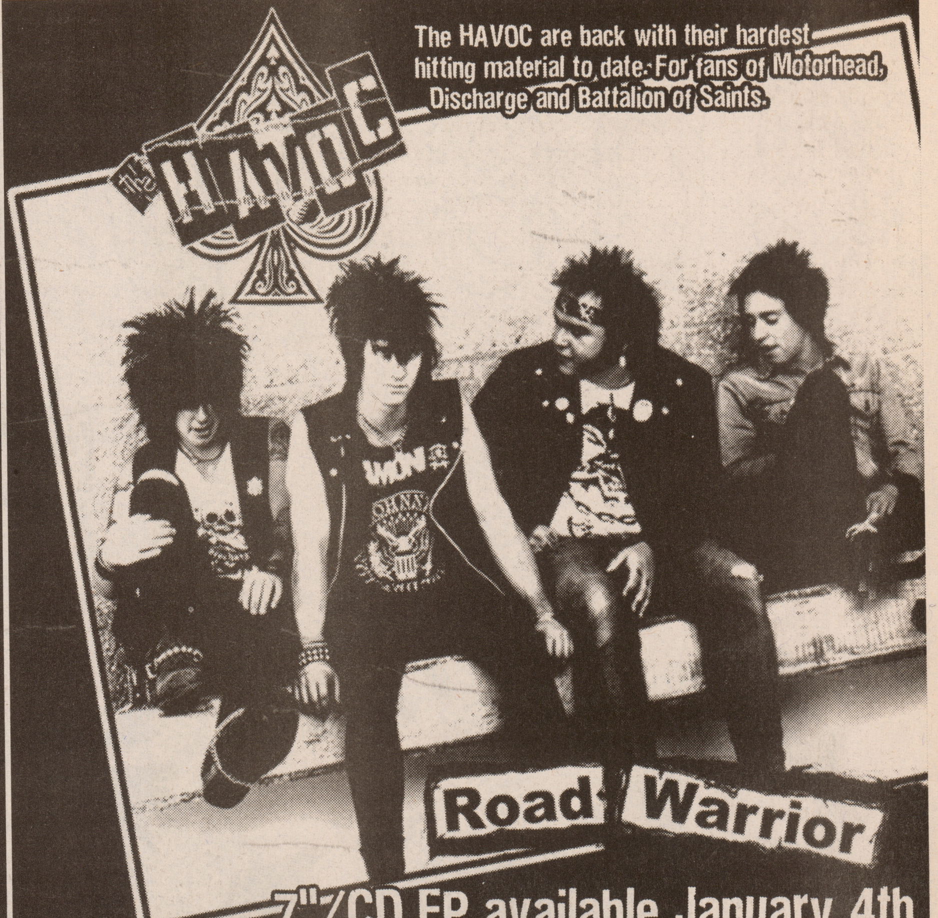

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For the better part of two years San Diegos' Cheap Sex has been delivering socially conscious, sonically-charged Punk Rock to the under-informed, Emo-weary masses. As a result of relentless gigging, Cheap Sex's music has evolved into a sound that's both appreciated and respected by punks throughout the US. Their debut full-length on Punk Core, **Launch Off to War** was an immediate success, thus laying the groundwork for their newest release, **Headed For A Breakdown**. Cheap Sex is a band that will continue to grow in both music and influence; love 'em or hate 'em, they won't be going away any time soon. I was able to reach vocalist Mike Virus and rhythm guitarist Phil for an interview, and well, here it is...

Under the Volcano: Mike, Tell me a little about your experience fronting the Virus. To an outsider, it seemed like the band was respected, "successful," and becoming even more popular. What happened?

Mike Virus: After the band finished recording *Still Fighting For A Future* I was offered a position in California, which I chose to take and further my career as a software engineer. When the band was formed--and in the early days of The Virus--the focus was on the fun we were having, and friendships within the band. How "big" the band was getting I don't think was so much of a concern in the early days. When I left the band I left on good terms, and I still talk to the original band members on a regular basis, many of whom I actually talk to on a daily basis. The early days of The Virus were some of the best times of my life, and I wouldn't have traded it for the world. To me, the Virus today has absolutely nothing to do with The Virus when I was in it; there's not one original member left in the band that goes by that name today.

UTV: What possessed you to call this band Cheap Sex, and what meaning--if any--is behind the name?

Mike Virus: There is no meaning whatsoever. I thought it would be a name that would draw attention on a flyer, and had some humor in it. The band has some pretty serious lyrics, and I think that having a name that doesn't match the lyrical content makes for an interesting band name. When someone hears the name "Cheap Sex," and then listens to our records--I don't think they would expect the type of message we try to get across.

UTV: As with The Virus, it seems that Cheap Sex is unafraid to experiment and push musical boundaries, which contributes to the band having its own sound. Was there a conscious effort to avoid the generic *oompah oompah* championed by many of today's spiky-haired bands? When the band was first formed, did members make any specific agreements or promises to each other about how things would be approached? If so, what went on?

Mike Virus: There was some discussion about it. I was also very conscious about this with The Virus. If you go back and listen to a Virus record as early as *Global Crisis* you'll hear a song called "Pull My Strings," which sounded nothing like the other songs on that EP. I was always conscious of this because I know what I like and don't like when I listen to Punk records, and see a live show. If all songs follow one formula and possess the same tempo, I get bored out of my skull. I want the songs to sound different from each other, and I don't think Hardcore Punk has to be as restricted as some people think it's supposed to be. During the song writing process, I want the band to have complete freedom to express through our music however it is that we feel, and I'll never feel restricted by boundaries, genre, or however a critic or fan has pigeonholed us as to the way we are "supposed" to sound.

UTV: Lyrically, Cheap Sex has always been about both political and social awareness. Ultimately, what is the message or messages that you'd like to send to those listening to your music?

Mike Virus: Taking responsibility for your life. Knowing you don't have to be an incoherent, babbling moron who vomits on themselves to be a punk. To have a keen awareness of what's going on in the world around you, and make some attempt to get off your ass and do something--whether that means getting involved in your community, in politics, starting a band, doing a zine--just something! Leave your fucking mark. The world is in worse shape today then it was when I was growing up, and I don't see any future for the next generation unless we wake the fuck up now and see what's going on and get involved.

UTV: Historically, Punk Core bands tend to be apolitical, trafficking more in beer and pogoing than social commentary. Initially, did higher-ups at the label voice any concerns that the political content of your songs might be too "heavy" for that label's audience?

Mike Virus: Punk Core knew quite well what we were about before signing us. They were very familiar with my work with The Virus, and knew for sure that they wouldn't be getting any songs about beer cans, hairdos, boots , or Oi! chants from us. Defiance is also now on Punk Core, as well as Action! from Canada; those bands also have a political message. I think Punk Core is becoming a much more diverse label when it comes to these sorts of things than maybe it was in the past, and I think that, in turn, is turning on more people to the label, as well as the bands.

UTV: Your second LP, *Headed For A Breakdown* was released on Punk Core not too long ago. Tell me a little about the record and how it may or may not differ from *Launch Off to War.*

Mike Virus: It's a better record all around. The band knows each other better now, and we've been playing together long enough to know each others' styles, and what works within the band and what doesn't. The songs are more powerful in my opinion, the production is much better. It's an angrier, more urgent record in both the music as well as the lyrics. Not to take anything away from *Launch Off to War* however; I think that was a strong debut release, but I just think *Headed For A Breakdown* is a better Cheap Sex record.

UTV: I feel the lyrical content of *Headed For A Breakdown* is stronger than that of its predecessor. Is there any reason behind this you could point to?

Mike Virus: Yes. This past year we've seen so much going on in the world that I had countless things to write about in my lyrics. I guess I'll have to thank the Bush Administration for that--see? They are good for something! They provided much inspiration this past year for me as a lyricist. Between the Iraqi War debacle, the freedom of speech issues regarding the FCC, the stem cell research issues, I have had PLENTY to write about this time around.

UTV: On *Headed For A Breakdown*, "Raped by the FCC," is one of my personal favorites, as is "False Pride." One song deals with censorship while the other deals with racism. Tell me why you decided to write these songs, and what, if any, personal experiences fed directly into your writing process.

Mike Virus: Growing up Jewish I have definitely encountered my share of racism. Today within the scene, it has become almost acceptable to buy Rock Against Communism records, support bands like Skrewdriver, and make racial comments. If you pulled that shit years ago you would have had some serious consequences to pay for that mentality--today it seems like that has become more acceptable. I have also started to see more people befriending Nazis, and then when confronted about it they say, "Hey, he's cool to me. Fuck politics man--I just wanna have fun." Fencewalkers is what I call them, and I think that racism is the last thing we need more of these days. All racism has brought us is wars--and we have enough of that.

UTV: Do you feel that there's a void in current Punk Rock music with regard to political expression and underpinning in the lyrics of other bands? If so, how important is politics' place in Punk Rock?

Mike Virus: I think politics has a place in punk, just like the beer can bands have a place in punk, as do the straight edge kids have a place in punk. Punk is a means of expression, and a symbol of personal freedom. If you have something to say, then say it--just mean what you're saying. I don't think politics is more or less important in the general sense when talking about what is or what isn't important when it comes to Punk Rock. It's more a question of what is and what isn't important to your own particular band. Would I like to see more bands sing about what's going on in the world? Sure I would; that's what opened my eyes when I was younger. However, every band has to make that decision for themselves.

Phil: I think politics in music has been revamped recently. I assume it has a lot to do with the current administration in power; people have been angry enough to speak out in their music. Not just with Punk Rock either; I see it spreading to all different genres of music, which I think is great, because Punk Rock isn't for everyone, and at least these people that listen to other forms of music can hear the same message.

UTV: What's your opinion on Dubya Bush, his administration, and the current situation in Iraq?

Mike Virus: You will seriously need to tack on another 200-300 pages for me to answer that question completely. What I can tell you is that I feel he and his administration are the most dangerous this country has ever seen. And what's happening in Iraq will seem like a Caribbean Cruise if that motherfucker is re-elected. By the time this interview gets printed we'll already know if he got re-elected or not, but if he does get re-elected I will most likely need to be sedated. Either that, or I will need to commit myself to an institution. If they tweak the votes like they did in the 2000 election, he may win even if he's not elected anyway. If anyone wants to discuss the details of why he is so dangerous, they are more than welcome to email me at mikevirus@cheapsexpunks.com. I love discussing politics.

Phil: I can only say what's already been said by everyone else a million times before: We had no right being there, they weren't a threat in the first place to America, they don't want us there. This mission was never accomplished like Bush has said, no weapons of mass destruction were ever found--even though Bush said they had them--these 9/11 terrorists were mostly Saudis, so what Iraq had to do with it I have no idea... and in the end, all we've accomplished and continue to do is breed more terrorists by having this unjust war continue. [People] get angry when they behead an American, but what the hell would we do if some completely different country invaded us and imposed their own ideals because they didn't like our way of life? Many would sure as fuck fight back.

UTV: Your recent tour with Kamikaze Zero brought you guys back to the East Coast, particularly New York. I distinctly remember that you guys rarely come out and play New York shows. What's the experience been like with regards to playing here again? What do you miss--or NOT miss--most about New York?

Mike Virus: It was great being back on the East Coast. It's where I'm from, and it was great seeing old friends and familiar places. What I miss most about New York is old friends and places we used to hang out at. Some of my best memories of New York are the early days of ABC No Rio, and weekends at Coney Island High. There was a time period when I would go up to New York all the time; everything was happening in New York. I grew up and was raised in Philadelphia. Me and my friends would take the train up to New York all the time. For a while there were so many clubs doing shows, and so many punks around, there was always something to do. You had ABC No Rio in the Lower East Side, you had CBGB, you had The Pipeline in North Jersey, you had Wetlands, Coney Island High, The Continental...countless places to see shows. It was great. The early days of ABC No Rio I miss a lot. Bands like Public Nuisance, Nausea, Born Against, Citizens Arrest, Rorschach, The Denied…countless bands who played all the time--that was a great time.

Phil: I actually can't wait to go back. I don't miss the cigarette prices and toll booths, but the people were good, particularly in Long Island. I didn't notice the same elitist attitude that you get a lot of out here. I wanna send a shout out to my home girl and baby mama Alliey, by the way. I also gotta add that playing with Kamikaze Zero was a lot of fun, they're fucking great.

UTV: Some time ago, while on tour your band had an unfortunate brush with bad luck which came in the form of a car accident, leaving your old guitarist, John, in pretty bad shape. What effect did that incident have on you and the rest of the group?

Mike Virus: Changed the band; made me realize how lucky you are to be alive. Made me cherish my friends more. Made me realize you never know what can happen, and that no one is immortal. John is back in the band now, and we're happy to have him back.

Phil: I noticed we don't tour with a trailer now.

UTV: What do you feel is the most important contribution you--or Cheap Sex, or Punk Rock--has made to the world?

Mike Virus: I guess if our message, shows, music has had an impact on anyone's lives, or makes them happy, or they have fun at our shows or maybe gave them something to think about in the terms of our lyrics, then I feel our mission is accomplished.

Phil: As far as Cheap Sex goes, a lot of these kids love it, seeing these kids really into it, making web pages and stuff that are dedicated to the band shows they must enjoy something about it to spend their own time like that. As for Punk Rock's contributions, well, there are just too many for me personally to get into, I'll go on and on about it. I guess I can say you learn to question what you're told.

UTV: What would you be doing right now if you weren't in a band?

Mike Virus: I have a career as a software engineer, so I guess that would be all I'd be doing. The band is a huge part of my life, and I'd be miserable without it. The job, on its own, is not enough to make me happy. The job with the band is perfect for me.

Phil: I'd be trying to start one.

UTV: Is there a message you'd like to send to the Punk Rock community? And, if so, what is it?

Mike Virus: Do whatever it takes to be happy in life; you're only here once for a very short amount of time. Know the world around you, and let yourself be heard. Get off your ass and do something, and leave your mark. Once you do, it's forever, and you'll never be forgotten.

Phil: Don't be a moron, don't fuck up the clubs, or bum rush the doors... you're not getting into a show for free that way, and you're not only making more and more clubs stop having punk shows, but you're making yourself look like an ass. It happens a lot here, and everywhere else, I'm sure. X

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THE EXIT

DARREN PALTROWITZ AND RICH BLACK

Home For An Island [Some], The Exit's second full-length, in many ways continues where 2002's **New Beat** left off. Pop hooks intertwine with punk urgency; Reggae and Dub merge with Indie Rock; personal introspection is offset by a broad world view. But on **Home For An Island**, The Exit's "sound" has come even further into its own; snatches of The Police or nods to The Clash might still be heard, but the band is undoubtedly its own best source of inspiration. Thanks to the band (vocalist/bassist Jeff DaRosa, guitarist/vocalist Ben Brewer and drummer Gunnar Olsen) for taking time out of their busy schedule to answer our questions.

Under the Volcano: What originally made you want to become a musician? Was there an album that just made you want to pick up an instrument, or are you like many Long Islanders in that a parent forced you to start taking piano lessons, which led to future musical skills?

Ben Brewer: Well, first off I'd like to tell you that we aren't from Long Island, although I've been there, and some parts are really nice. I always loved music, and would dance to it and feel it totally, and want to be one with it. Michael Jackson and The Clash are two groups that probably made me really want to get up and do it. "White Man In Hammersmith Palace" and "Man In the Mirror." That shit is beautiful.

Gunnar Olsen: Well, being that I'm not from Long Island, I'm unaware of this forced piano-lesson-conspiracy. But I can say that my father's a professional musician, and that--mixed with my mother's love for brilliant music--had a huge influence. Also, hearing *Nevermind* right as I began taking drum lessons made me think, "Hmmm... now this could be fun."

UTV: A lot of people would assume that having a member related to a music industry honcho could only help a band's career. Is this the case, or has that plagued The Exit?

Ben Brewer: It's actually made us work a lot harder. To prove it to ourselves. It's just is what is it. Either you've got it or you don't. We don't pull strings, so we'll have to see what happens.

Gunnar Olsen: People will always assume things in terms of who a person is, who you are related to. We've never really worried about it. We definitely took steps to do it on our own, especially in the beginning; you want to prove you can build an audience on your own merit. And, after 350 shows, if someone talked smack about "honcho this, honcho that," we have three years of making real music to shove in their ignorant faces.

UTV: As a Ska-loving teenager, I caught The Loose Nuts on two occasions--once with the Bosstones at Roseland, and once with Reel Big Fish at Irving Plaza. Naturally, a lot of people are embarrassed by their Ska pasts, yet The Exit cites The Clash, The Police and other Reggae-influenced bands amongst its musical inspirations. Do you look back on those days as if a lot was gained in terms of experience and knowledge, or do you shudder entirely at the memory of Loose Nuts? Have you found a lot of other Ska refugees in bands that you've gigged alongside?

Ben Brewer: There is a total Ska kid in this awesome band Army of Me. They are from DC; WE love them. The bass player, John, used to have a Mustard Plug sticker on his bass and we laughed about it. The Loose nuts was so much fun. I had a great time in that band, so did Gunnar. How lame would it have been if The Exit was another bullshit Emo band? REGGAE REVOLUTION ROCK...

Gunnar Olsen: I don't shudder at any of my musical past. My first band was a Punk Ska band, and I got great experience playing real clubs and going on tour for the first time, and meeting friends that changed me forever. I don't see any real connection between my old band and this band; I understand that Ben and I were both in it. But I see little point of bringing it up in an interview, because Jeff had nothing to do with it, and everyone has their first band.

UTV: How did you guys wind up on Some Records? What kind of role does Walter [Schreifels] play in the label?

Ben Brewer: Walter is an inspiration. We ended up on Some because we're cool.

Gunnar Olsen: I'm not sure what role Walter has in the label anymore, he'd know better than me. We met Craig [Yaskowitz] who works at Some before he worked there, and he always supported us. So, when he started working for Some, he pushed us to Some, and they bought it!

UTV: In playing more than 300 shows in support of your first album and having a sound that's all over the place stylistically, what kind of bands do you prefer to play out with? Or does that sort of thing not matter to you?

Ben Brewer: Right now we're on tour with Muse, and we sound nothing like them, and it makes total sense, and their crowd is down. We work the best with other bands who are just doing their own thing. Which is really nice.

Gunnar Olsen: I prefer bands that are trying to create rather than regurgitate, but in a "scene" it's hard to avoid. We got started in the what I would barely call "the punk scene" because it was what we grew up on and knew. But the scene that I see now--and that we played many of those 350 shows in--doesn't resemble much of the scene I remember growing up in. I'd like to see us working with more unique bands, bands more about substance than scene appeal.

UTV: How much did your experiences supporting *New Beat* find their way directly into the creation of *Home For An Island*?

Ben Brewer: We got way tighter. Way tighter. It helped us really step it up in terms of intensity, even though the album is slower than the first one. The tempos, the lyrics, the message. More on point. Headed in a better direction.

UTV: According to Kevin Carson's website, you guys have some interest from major labels. In seeing what Ben has witnessed from observing his family--and the placement of The Loose Nuts and The Exit on *American Pie* soundtracks--has landing on a major always been a goal, or would it be preferable to put your third album out on Some as well?

Ben Brewer: We don't know man; we're just are trying to make the best records we can, wherever it's the best place to make them.

UTV: If being on a "major" IS one of the band's goals, how would you avoid becoming an over-simplified, homogenized version of yourselves? Can a "mass audience" truly appreciate The Exit's subtleties, or the passion of your delivery? I'm envisioning a meeting with a bean counter at a major...you're going to HAVE to set the guy straight at some point, and say, "We might have some similar sounds in our music, but The Exit is a COMPLETELY different type of band from No Doubt; you're gonna have to come up with something that no one has really done before....or at least since 1980 between The Clash or The Police. " Any suggestions for the bean counter?

Ben Brewer: Yeah. Keep counting the beans and put enough in our bowl so we can help people wake the fuck up!

Gunnar Olsen: The Exit has no plans to sign to anything that would force us to compromise our ideas or identity. If a deal with a major were to work out, it would be mainly to get our music out and available to more people that otherwise might not hear us. If they don't want us for who we are, fuck it, I'm not gonna plea to anybody and beg to be on their label.

UTV: Do you have any thoughts on the new Ted Leo record, *Shake the Sheets*? I'll bet you guys and Ted like some of the same bands...

Ben Brewer: Yeah, I heard that record for the first time hanging out in Boston; I really really liked it. It's more realized. Sounds great. I was supposed to go to his brother Chris Leo's book release [the name of the book is *White Pigeons*] last week in New York, but I was having what I would call a bad week, so I didn't make it out. We last played with Ted in Chicago, and it was awesome. I'm really glad he's doing well.

Gunnar Olsen: I heard a few tracks at a party. I dug it. Ted's great, and he's always been warm to us.

UTV Being known as a New York City band, The Exit is an hour drive from Long Island yet has only played one Long Island gig, as part of The Reunion Show's CD Release Party at The Downtown. What do you think can be done to our scene to improve it and bring a band like yours out more often?

Ben Brewer: Well, we've played Long Island a lot more times than just one, but that is exactly the problem, is that you know a lot about us, but you don't know how many times we've rocked the 'burbs. It seems that since we don't fit into the typical Long Island box we don't seem to do to well there, but everyone loved us when we did the Glassjaw CD release show at CBGBs two years ago, and they were mostly Long Island kids. All the Long Island bands love us, and those kids are cool. We just haven't seemed to get the rush from the... you know...fans...We're down to play, we just want people to groove.

Gunnar Olsen: Long Island has never given us a warm reception, and it's usually a bunch of blank faces expecting sounds that are familiar. I have received many letters from Long Islanders pleading us to reconsider. I don't hate the place or anything, but I think we're a good enough band that we're worth a trip to New York City to see us; it'll be good for them! But we'll be back, we're just waiting for the right time.

UTV: Jeff recently contributed vocals to Straylight Run's cover of "With God On Our Side" for PunkVoter.com; how did the collaboration come about, and why chose that song in particular?

Jeff DaRosa: Michelle, John [Nolan] and I did another Dylan song earlier on called "My Back Pages," and we really liked how it came out so when Straylight Run got the chance to submit a song to PunkVoter.com, John picked "God On Our Side." I think the song is as relevant today as it was in the '60s; historically, religion has always been a huge part of politics in the United States and in the rest of the world. The idea of a certain God being on a certain side has always helped shape the justification for ugly as well as beautiful things. You know, shit happens.

UTV: Finally, any last words for the kids?

Ben Brewer: Everybody, you gotta do something right, if you find love, hold on tight....don't push your love away.....Oh yeah, and this: STAY FREE, STAY YOUNG, NO BLOOD FOR OIL. PEACE.

Gunnar Olsen: Don't be scared, it's only music--thanks for the questions! X

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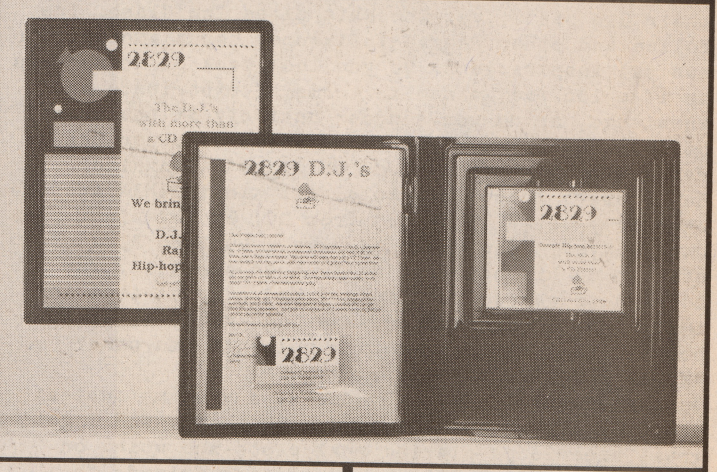

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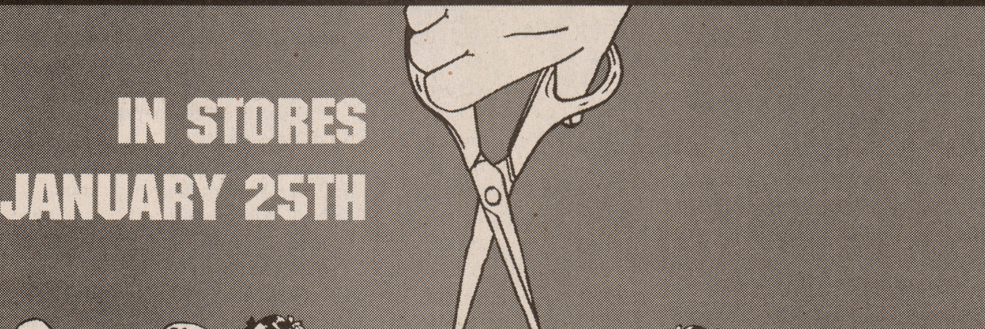

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With a catalog that includes releases by cutting edge bands like Malady and Lickgoldensky--and packaging just as visionary--Level-Plane has become a force within the modern Punk and Hardcore community. Level-Plane owner (and drummer for Hot Cross) Greg Drudy answered questions via email while in between tours.

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mike andriani

Under the Volcano: First off, congratulations on the new Hot Cross EP, *Fair Trades and Farewells*, and the fanfare that's surrounded the band as of late; it's a marvelous testament as to how much Hardcore has matured. Do you care to comment on your band`s latest effort?

Greg Drudy: Thanks for the kind words. We are really pleased with the response to the record.

UTV: In handling the duties of the drum kit in Hot Cross and the day to operation of Level-Plane and its distro, you obviously have a love of Punk and Hardcore. What got you into Punk and Hardcore? And how did that interest in a music-driven subculture lead you to being more than just a participant, to take an active role in the creative community?

Greg Drudy: Early on, I sort of recognized that the essence of this scene and what keeps it moving is the willingness of people to participate and take risks for the sake of the music. I grew up in Tampa, Florida, and during the early to mid 1990s there was a very active scene and a ton of shows to go to. I sort of discovered Hardcore and Punk on my own there, and cultivated a passion for it as I recognized that virtually anyone could be a productive part of it.

UTV: With releases from bands such as Hot Cross, Lickgoldensky, North of America, and Racebannon amongst others, the common view within the community is that Level-Plane has excelled in painting a more diverse and progressive portrait of Punk and Hardcore. Do you have the goal in mind--when it comes to working with bands-to make Punk and Hardcore more of a "thinking man's music" rather than the anthemic, breakdown-filled jaunts of yore?

Greg Drudy: I simply release music I like and believe in. There was never a specific plan to release diverse music; I was just never much a fan of the more formulaic types of Hardcore and Punk. If I am going to release music, I need to release records I would listen to myself, and having diverse tastes is probably what makes the label more diverse than a lot of people would first expect.

UTV: While we are on the topic of making Punk and Hardcore progressive, do you feel the community as whole could stand to be more proactive with the current state of affairs in the world? Or has Punk and Hardcore just evolved into a genre of entertainment free of convictions?

Greg Drudy: There has to be a balance between preaching to the choir--which punk is most often guilty of--and being completely apolitical. I think there are plenty of bands that have important issues to discuss and are brave enough to approach the audience in a challenging way. Coliseum is one such band. Ryan [Patterson, guitar and vocals] goes out of his way to make sure he communicates with his audience. However, he also challenges them to analyze the way they conduct themselves on a daily basis. I find this much more interesting and effective than chanting slogans and making patches with pictures of upside down flags or war-scenes. There are always bands that are communicating important things in important ways. People just need to look for them.

UTV: From the experience I have in working for one record label and running my own, I know that doing a record label is a lot of hard work. Could you tell our readers what the day to day operations of running Level-Plane is like?

Greg Drudy: Each day is a new set of tasks; the most consistent and time-consuming are correspondence and filling/shipping distro orders. I am constantly in touch with bands, pressing plants, mastering plants, publicity people, distribution people...it's all very time consuming, and all too often thankless. Not to mention a financial burden.

UTV: Is there a particular record label that you saw as model for Level-Plane? Or just perhaps a label that you happened to respect?

Greg Drudy: I've always looked up to Touch and Go and Dischord. Both of those labels succeeded in creating a community while releasing quality music they believed in. I don't think you can ask for more out of any label. I'm not sure I modeled Level-Plane after anything in particular, other than labels that take music very seriously and go out of their way to do what they can for their artists.

UTV: Level Plane is distributed through Mordam--undoubtedly the largest distributor of independent music in North America-which services many of the top chain stores in the country, including Hot Topic. Have you found it difficult to maintain integrity as the potential for monetary success increases, as today's Punk and Hardcore is fertile ground for profit?

Greg Drudy: Honestly, nothing has really changed in the way I conduct the label; the records are just available in more places. When the option of distributing the releases through Mordam presented itself, I asked all the bands on the label what they thought of that possibility, and I had positive responses from everyone I work with. Since getting on board with Mordam, the bands have been very excited about seeing their records widely available in a variety of places. Why should the availability of music be so limited? I never understood that mentality. I don't think integrity has anything to do with where people can buy your records; it has way more to do with what you release, and why you release it. As far as that goes, the label has never compromised itself or any of the bands on it.

UTV: When Level-Plane works with a particular band, what are some of the things you look for?

Greg Drudy: They need to have a strong work ethic and take their music seriously. They have to be genuine and friendly. I mostly work with friends and people I've been in contact with in the past. There are very few bands on the label that I haven't already had some kind of relationship with prior to the label working with them. Level-Plane has always been about a community of bands and people working together.

UTV: Do you have any words of encouragement or discouragement for someone that would like to start their own label?

Greg Drudy: Prepare to lose money and don't get tangled up with credit cards. Believe in what you're doing and ignore naysayers and armchair critics.

UTV: At times, complaints of complacency and stagnation have been common in the community. Many feel as if certain issues aren't really being addressed--i.e., sexism/homophobia/racism in the scene, bands profiting off the scene, etc. Is there anything that you'd like to see happen within the Punk and Hardcore community that isn't occurring now? And, if so, why do you feel those concerns aren't in action now?

Greg Drudy: There is very little work ethic in the community now. A band can exist for four weeks, and they'll have a full tour booked and three 7"s out. With no work ethic comes complacency. I suppose if people took the time to really consider what they're doing and why they're doing it, you would see a lot more passion for what is being created. It feels like that passion has been lost, because things are so easy now.

UTV: What are some goals that you have for Level-Plane, Hot Cross, and just your own life in general?

Greg Drudy: I'm content in continuing to release music I believe in and enjoy, and being able to work with my friends. Hot Cross has similar goals; to continue do the band until things feel stagnant, or we no longer enjoy each other's company. Fortunately, that doesn't seem like a possibility for the time being. X

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The Sleeping

Dan McClernon

For the past several years, Long Island has been a hotbed of musical talent, ranging from Indie Rock chart-toppers Taking Back Sunday, Straylight Run and Brand New to melodic Hardcore luminaries The Backup Plan and Scraps and Heart Attacks, to musical visionaries such as On the Might of Princes and Yes Sensei. One band that never really got the recognition it deserved was Skycamefalling, one of the best metallic Hardcore outfits the LI scene had to offer. However, the same fate shouldn't befall The Sleeping, who, with three former members of Skycamefalling and the release of their debut album, Believe What We Tell You [One Day Savior], are already creating their own buzz.

The Sleeping, while maintaining some traits of their previous project, have taken their sound in a decidedly more Post-Punk direction, with influences scanning the spectrum from Prog, to Emo, to straight up Rock. With the recent demise and/or hiatus of some of Long Island's "better-known" bands, The Sleeping couldn't have come along at a better time to inject some energy into a transitional period for this sandbar's music. To paraphrase their album title, believe what I tell you: The Sleeping are ready to take the next step; they could very well be the Island's next Indie Rock chart-toppers.

Under the Volcano: Would you guys mind introducing yourselves and what each of you performs in the band?

Joe Zizzo: I'm Joe, I play the drums plus a little vocals up in there. We got Sal Mignano on the bass and vox, Cameron Keym on the guitar, keyboards and vox, and Doug Robinson as lead vocals, then of course Kaptain Bagel on lights.

UTV: How did you come up with "The Sleeping" as a name? I mean, don't you think a moniker that evokes images of sweet dreams and snoring might be a bad first impression to make on the public?

Joe Zizzo: [laughs] Well, it's better than Digital Daydream, right? Sal and I--when we came up with that name--loved it, and said, no matter what, we were naming the band that regardless of what the rest of the band thought. Then the next day we realized it was ridiculously flaming so we peaced it. The meaning behind the name is not just skin deep. We're not 18 years old.... we're all in our early to mid 20s, and we know a lot of people settling down getting married, working full-time jobs they hate, and doing nothing but complaining they can't stand their lives. To us, it symbolizes people who sleep on life, who watch it pass them by because parents or friends told them they have to be practical rather than follow a dream. But, although we live on five bucks a day and eat like crap, we're still able to play every night and live out our dream, so maybe we're the ones asleep.

> ...we didn't want every Hardcore kid to flip out, screaming, "Skycamefalling are a bunch of toolboxes and went soft," so we figured starting fresh would be the best option.

UTV: The Sleeping is comprised of three/fifths of Skycamefalling? First off, what was the reason behind the demise of your previous band?

Joe Zizzo: Cameron, our guitarist, was the only original SCF member. Sal and I joined the band closer towards the end. As far as the breakup is concerned, musically we were changing. The only writing Sal ever did with the band was on the two song EP SCF released, and as for me I never wrote with the band, so naturally we adding two new members would alter the sound. We knew we wanted to add more melody and singing to our music, and we didn't want every Hardcore kid to flip out, screaming, "Skycamefalling are a bunch of toolboxes and went soft," so we figured starting fresh would be the best option. New members, new sound, new name.

UTV: So instead of parting ways completely, the three of you decided to re-group under a different name with entirely new tunes. Did you immediately know after the end of Skycamefalling that you three would continue on together? Did you have any idea what the new band would sound like? How would you describe your own sound, as it encompasses a variety of genres, making it difficult to define? And did you set out to create a sound that was a deliberate departure from what you had become known for?

Joe Zizzo: Yes we knew who wanted to continue to play in a band immediately. I actually flipped out because my second show with SCF, those dicks told me we were breaking up. I lost my shit because I finally got into a band that was working, and they were peacing themselves out. We all talked; once again, the sound was changing, and not to mention not everyone wanted to continue playing music for a living so the three of us were left to form The Sleeping. We had no idea of what we would sound like, but at first we didn't care.... we needed to find a new singer. After trying out twenty plus kids, we found Doug. Hailing from dirty Jersey the kid sang his heart out both times he came down, and tried out for us, but most importantly we knew his retarded personality would clash with our retarded personalities just right. In music today there are so many sub genres, and instead of saying we're Post-Apocalyptic Emo Dance Power Space Rock Hardcore Indie Hawaiian Fracture, I just like to say "Experimental Rock." The Sleeping sound, in no way was formed from a purposeful attempt at creating something different from our previous band. We all sat in my bedroom and annoyed my parents for hours on end because we would jam until we heard something we liked. Our sound derived from our personalities mixing musically in a jam, making whatever the hell we wrote as natural as possible.

UTV: Your debut album, *Believe What We Tell You*, was released on Long Island-based label, OneDaySavior, owned by Chris Tzompkanakis, who was also in Skycamefalling. Was it important to keep your music in the Long Island family, so to speak? Was there initial interest from Ferret in releasing the record, and if so, were there any contractual obligations you had to work out before moving onto OneDaySavior?

Joe Zizzo: Ferret wasn't in the picture at all. As far as I know, SCF was done with Ferret altogether, so with this band there weren't any obligations to Ferret Records. Long Island has always been sweet as candy cane gumdrops to us, so after signing with Chris, yes, it felt reassuring we still had that Long Island family thing going on. We were approached by Chris and loved everything he had to offer. We all knew him personally--and although in this industry you never can predict what's going to happen in the future--we knew Chris wouldn't throw heels on us with some thigh-high stockings, give us all French manicures, and then bang us in the pooter.

UTV: Speaking of Long Island, as natives to this sandbar, with all the action that has been going on out here in the past couple of years, where do you see both your past and present projects fitting in with the music scene? Do you feel that the more popular LI bands have gotten, the more factioned the scene has become? Also, has there been any major label interest surrounding the band thus far?

Joe Zizzo: Umm...as far as Skycamefalling is concerned, I wasn't in the band until the end, but what I knew of them before I got into the band was that they had a strong underground following and really devoted fan base. As far as I knew they were one of the bands that started the new sound of Hardcore today, that whole concept of mixing melody with chugga chuggas. The Sleeping has its own thing going; I don't think it's typical of what's been coming out of LI recently, but I can see how we could be classified with the Long Island scene, which is fine by me with all the attention LI has been getting recently. But kids don't wanna even dance anymore 'cause they're afraid their diesel shoes and pants will get ruined in the pit. I definitely think the whole LI underground scene is not what it used to be. As for the majors, no one has offered us a few million yet, so we're still waiting...

UTV: At the present time, the Long Island scene is in a state of flux in some ways. Many of the bands that were seen as the future of Long Island--such as Heads vs. Breakers and Backup Plan--unexpectedly called it quits, while the bigger of the LI bands, like Taking Back Sunday, have grown almost too large to be associated simply with one geographical area. With all this in mind, do you feel any added pressure to step up to the forefront and be a major player in giving Long Island a fresh face and a new sound to be recognized by?

Joe Zizzo: There is pressure, yes, but mostly because we have crazy bills and need to work our asses off so someone doesn't come and break our legs. It's amazing how some LI bands have gotten so big, and yes, there's a part of us that knows it's gonna be hard to be noticed amongst the explosion of all the bands in scene right now. However, there is another part of us that knows we enjoy what we do, appreciate it and are going to continue to push until we make a dent in music...or die horribly in an unfortunate ceiling fan accident.

UTV: Well back to the record *Believe What We Tell You.* the title really begs the question, "Just what exactly do you have to tell us? And why should we listen, huh?"

Joe Zizzo: Well, the album is a concept record dealing with the inconsistencies and misconceptions that have become the backbone of media industry. So the title is more a satire of the media, rather than us trying to tell people to believe our idiot opinions. The idea or message of the title track is more to get people to be aware of things going on around them--in the media or anything surrounding their everyday lives--more than pushing people to believe any certain thing. But there is one thing that you do have to believe... and this one is for people who don't have our record... you need it. NOW!

UTV: On *Believe What We Tell You*, you recorded both "The Big Breakdown: Day 1" and "The Big Breakdown: Day2." Obviously there's a connection between the two, documenting a story I'm sure our readers would be interested in hearing, especially considering that the former is one of the best songs on the album. Would you mind going into a little detail about the songs? And do you think you could've told the story simply in one tune? Though nine/ten minute song isn't very "Punk Rock," I'm afraid.

Joe Zizzo: The two tracks were developed by Doug during the first of many "breakdowns" we experienced on tour. These two songs were the only songs on the record that weren't mutually developed lyrically. Doug was going through some personal struggles--puberty--and he decided to vent on these tracks. Musically we had some themes that were similar in the songs, but on a whole were totally different entities, which helped us create the two part story. Come see us play and buy 15 copies of our record, and I'm sure Doug would be more than happy to indulge into the song topics more!

UTV: Another song that catches the listener's ear is "If Your Heart Was Broken...You Would Be Dead." What made you guys think you could pull off a five and a half minute song with the only words being the title of the song, being sung like a mantra over and over again? What's more, how the hell did you guys create a tune that's five and a half minutes long with the only words being the title of the song, and make it so gut-wrenching and enjoyable?

Joe Zizzo: [laughs] Well, first off, thanks for the compliment. Well, lately we've taken notice of the fact that there are a plethora of bands out there creating music that sounds like a carbon copy of another band musically and lyrically. Don't get me wrong; I love to hear a good song about heartbreak every once in awhile-"Achy Breaky Heart"--but not a whole record full of it. This is how the idea came about. I think people can relate to this song because they may know the feeling of having a friend that calls you every other day crying about another dude/dudette that "broke their heart." And to top it off, you're single, so you feel like saying, "Yo...I hate your face... I don't even have anyone, Poindexter!" But hey, we're not heartless or against writing about a girl; in fact, we do have a song about a relationship on this record. But, I guess the idea of the song is catching on due to a really good crowd response, and the mood we created musically on the song was able to keep people's attention despite the length of the song. Yay!

UTV: So with the album now available, do you intend to do a fair amount of touring in support of it? Will you be going out with any bands of note? Besides touring, what other interesting tidbits of info can you divulge about the future of the Sleeping?

Joe Zizzo: We will be touring forever, hopefully with the likes of Taking Back Sunday. We're out with Bayside and Action Action presently. Like this album, the next one, as far as direction, sound, and style, will still be a question to us until we complete it. But I can promise it will be interesting at the least, and we will certainly attempt once again to put forth something a little different, maybe even another secret fart track.

UTV: I'd like to thank you for taking the time to answer my questions. Good luck with the album, and if you'd like to add anything, anything at all, now would be the time to do so. Thanks again!

Joe Zizzo: As you know, at our stage of the game any press is good press, and we can't thank you enough for this opportunity! X

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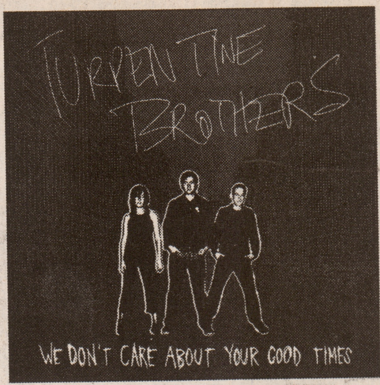
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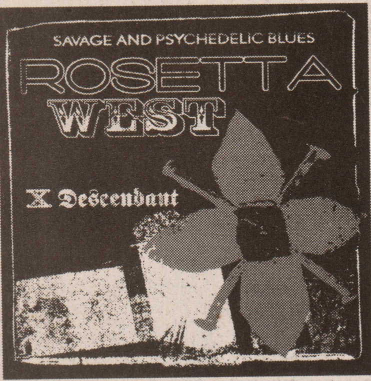
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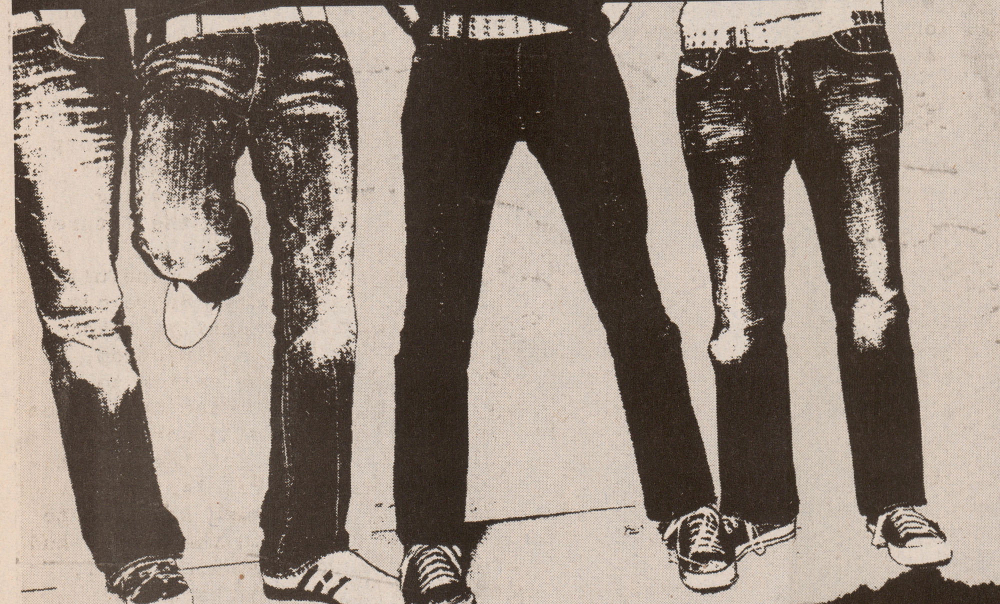

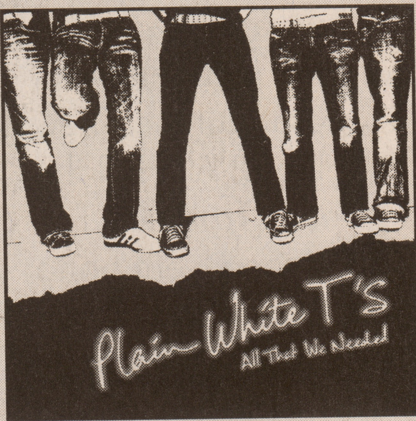
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WALLS OF JERICHO

MYK

When Walls of Jericho played Long Island with Bleeding Through, I got to spend some time with guitarist Mike Hasty and bassist Aaron Ruby from the band. I spoke to them about having a female vocalist in a male-dominated genre, about some of their recent touring and about their new album, All Hail the Dead [Trustkill]. The band then went on to blaze through an extremely impressive set. Walls of Jericho is currently tearing up the live circuit, and front person Candace Kucsulain is a monster vocalist. Thanks to everyone involved in getting this set up.

SH 'N' ROLL
TABLISHED 2001
BURY YOUR DEAD
RMOR

Photo: John McKaig

Under the Volcano: Despite the fact that the lyrics don't seem to be those of a religious band, the cover for *Bound and Gagged* makes the record sort of look like a Tooth & Nail type release... and with Walls of Jericho as the band name... have you caught any kind of flak?

Mike Hasty: We don't get any flak ever really. We always get everyone asking about it, though. I don't think anyone gets too emotionally upset one way or another. But no, we are not a religious band.

UTV: Why did the original drummer, Wes [Keely], leave the band?

Mike Hasty: Just personal differences between him and the rest of the band.

UTV: Candace broke her nose on the last tour?

Aaron Ruby: That was the From Autumn to Ashes tour. That was in January.

UTV: From what we heard around here, that she didn't go immediately to the hospital; you guys actually finished the tour.

Mike Hasty: We finished the show. Went to the hospital then, like right after the show. It was broken. Did they fix it?

Aaron Ruby: No. They didn't do anything. They said that they had to wait for it to heal, then they would have to re-break it and reset it if she wanted to. Basically, they said, "We can't really do anything, and you can just live with it." They also said there would be a chance that it would heal straight, and I don't think she ever had it re-broken. It came out pretty straight.

Mike Hasty: Then she had it broken again after that. At a show in Detroit she was dancing and got it broken again a few weeks later again. Or a month later or something. After that, it was really straight. It was fine.

Aaron Ruby: It kind of got broken the other way, so it really actually sort of helped out.

UTV: I swear, this whole interview isn't about Candace. I don't have that many questions. Being a Hardcore band with a female member, do you find that you get a lot of that "perfect boyfriend" or mongoloid knuckle-dragger kids showing up in the crowd thinking they're going to be Candace's next boyfriend?

Mike Hasty: I don't think so. We get a lot of--especially as we're setting up--we get a lot of, "You're hot!" or "Will you marry me?" or something stupid like that. It was always some stupid line, but I don't think there was anything weird like that going on. I think the worst was actually when we went out with Metal bands, because those guys were more like "show your tits" kind of guys. Like, every night there would be a lot of that. They didn't really care about the music stuff; they just wanted to see her boobs. But with Hardcore kids, I think we've been around long enough where we have kind of proven our point. We don't really get that kind of stuff here.

UTV: Why don't you tell me about the new video you just shot earlier this month.

Mike Hasty: Yeah, it was on [October] the fourth. We shot it with Kevin Leonard, out in Anaheim. It's for the song "Chain Reaction". It's mostly live footage and it's got a little bit of a theme going; it's kind of like an anti-hero theme I guess. It's mostly based on Candace, and it's just this idea of people who come to our shows--not necessarily even us, so you have to take it out of that context--just the idea of Hardcore in general having a fanbase that thinks your cool and wants your autograph and, "Oh my god, I talked to whoever." The concept of Hardcore has always been real grass roots and everyone's equal and all that kind of stuff, so it's like this idea of her being pushed towards that the whole time and fighting it, and then finally getting really fed up with it. Then they were trying to change her into doing all this stuff she didn't want to do or be the person they wanted her to be in front of the camera. Then we get fed up and it's just us, and it's more about how we are. There is a lot of live footage. It's mostly, I would say, live show footage.

UTV: How did you decide what song from the album you wanted to do, or was it something the label decided?

Mike Hasty: Well, it was, but it wasn't. We had a couple of ideas floating around. We just knew that we wanted to do a video and we actually had ideas for different songs than that and then Josh [Grabelle], our label guy, just called us with an idea for that song, that he had, and it seemed to work out.

UTV: How did you hook up with Josh and Trustkill?

Mike Hasty: It was years ago. We played in Buffalo and he was doing merch for NORA. He saw us then. He had heard us I guess, and that was the first time he ever saw us I think, and as soon as we were done he came right up to us and offered us a deal, right there and then.

UTV: Now, you guys recorded at your own studio [Cloud City]...

Mike Hasty: I own the studio.

UTV: Do you find that not having somebody from outside the band listening to the recording, that you tend to miss things in the recordings because you know the songs so well?

Mike Hasty: I don't know; I think it happens to be the other way around. We know exactly what we want ourselves to sound like. We are the ones that are writing the songs. I can see with some other bands what you're saying, but just the fact that that's what I do, even when we're writing songs I kind of look at it from a producer's perspective, while we're writing.

UTV: Is that how you make your living?

Mike Hasty: Yeah. Well, now, we [the band] have been busy enough, but that's something that I still do. I still own the place, it's still running now. When I'm home, I try to do it as much as I can.

UTV: What's the Detroit scene like these days? How has it changed since bands like Negative Approach were big?

Mike Hasty: Well, back in the day, it was a completely different scene. But that is the case anywhere. It's just like any other scene, I would say. Like, everywhere you go you see some veteran kids who have been around for a really long time that think they know everything--or really do know everything about the scene--then you get a ton of kids that are new to the whole deal. Then you get the conflict of Metal vs Hardcore, 'cause Metal kids are obviously getting influenced by Hardcore and are starting to go to shows. Or the fight to keep it personal, but yet grow. You have that whole fight going. I would say the only difference between our scene and every other scene I noticed, we seem to have less people who are like veteran scene kids or whatever, that are active and doing something good, whether it be bands or other stuff. It just seems that everywhere else has kids that do things.

Aaron Ruby: We don't have that group of kids that books shows anymore.

Mike Hasty: Or kids that are trying to do clothing companies. Or trying to promote, or even like new bands. There are only like five bands in Detroit. There are so few of them and nobody ever wants to open a club, or they talk about it but they never do anything. It's just one of those scenes that it seems like nothing ever gets done.

Aaron Ruby: We don't have a DIY show space anymore.

Mike Hasty: Yeah, we don't have anything.

UTV: We don't have much either at this point, they keep closing places down.

Mike Hasty: That is a trial in most places now. Not many people are active doing things .

UTV: I've been doing the zine now for 11 years, I helped book shows for two years, and I started going to shows when I was 16. I don't know any other way of life.

Mike Hasty: I don't think there is one zine in Detroit, whether it be online or on paper. Not one. I remember going to a show and knowing 20 people there, now I really don't know any.

UTV: I went to a show here on the Island, where the only person I knew in the place was someone in one of the bands. I didn't know anyone in the crowd.

Mike Hasty: As far as I know, there is not one kid that does a distro, not one.

UTV: Do you think somewhere like Interpunk has really hurt that kind of thing because it is now so readily available?

Mike Hasty: No, I just think it's always been kind of weird. You need to have that core group of people that have been doing it for a long time in a positive way, and have them show other people how to do things. Like, if you go into a scene and there's just a bunch of kids there acting like idiots, then everyone just acts like idiots, 'cause that is all you know. And that seems to be a lot of what our scene looks like. People jumping around and getting in fights. Other than that, there is nothing productive. It makes for some real fun shows sometimes, but nothing productive.

UTV: Now you have two releases on Trustkill, but most people don't know that you have an early release on Eulogy. Tell me a little bit about that; is it an EP?

Mike Hasty: It's actually the first demo that we did, and our first 7" which came out on Undersestimater Records, just as a 7", it's like a Chicago label. That [*A Day and A Thousand Years*] got released originally by Genet Records, a Belgium label. It's harder to get stuff from there, you know? After the Trustkill deal, we had John Wylie redo it here through Eulogy so that we could get copies.

UTV: Can people get it? Is it still available?

Mike Hasty: Yeah, actually we sell them still. He still sells them and I just got an email recently that Genet is going to start re-pressing them also, so that the European market will have it again.

UTV: There aren't a lot of female fronted bands. There are you guys, bands like Damad… being that there is a lack--or actually it just isn't that common--where do you as a band and Candace see your influences coming from?

Mike Hasty: I think our influences have nothing to do with whether it's a guy or a girl.

UTV: I mean, she's brutal.

Mike Hasty: She is. But we never approached it as "How would a girl sing this part, how would a guy sing this part? Can you do something this guy can do?" We never tried to make her more male sounding, or more female. She kind of just does her own thing and writes. I think it's enough--just her presence and just being whatever it is that she is, and her whole song writing thing. I think that is enough.

UTV: She writes a lot of the lyrics?

Mike Hasty: She writes pretty much everything. I mean, we might help her with some arrangements and some things like that to make songs fit, but pretty much everything that is written is her stuff. I think that's enough. It makes us different just from that.

UTV: The song "My Father," on the first album...is that fictitious or is that someone's true story?

Mike Hasty: Yeah, It is more of a fictitious story. It's kind of based on a whole bunch of things that people go through that she knows about. It's definitely not an actual situation with her own father.

UTV: The lyrics for both albums, you don't address too much the typical Hardcore themes like "The Truth," "Straight Edge" and "Religion" is that a conscious decision, or do you feel that addressing those kind of things may alienate you from some people?

Mike Hasty: No, but I would say it might be conscious on her [Candace] part maybe. We don't tell her what to write songs about necessarily. Maybe we've had ideas where we've wanted to do--before we've even gotten to the song itself we might have ideas of where we wanted to go, like some rough subject matter or whatever. But nothing like "This is what we want to talk about, and this is our stance." Pretty much anything she sings about is what she wants to sing about.

UTV: Do you consider yourselves a Straight Edge band?

Mike Hasty: No. Actually only three of us out of five are Straight Edge. Religion--even if we were all religious--it's so hard to get everybody to agree, I don't see how people could be in a religious band anyway. It seems like everybody is so different about it.

UTV: Well, it seems like all those bands break up and get back together all the time anyway, so that's probably the reason.

Mike Hasty: All the typical things, like if you're talking about Unity and things like that you can have…we'll touch on those things a little bit. Something we don't even bother because they are so played out, and they don't apply to us in a way that we need to take up songs with.

UTV: On the new album *All Hail the Dead* there seems to be an ongoing attack on cosmopolitan human beings.

Aaron Ruby: For that record, that was pretty much the idea.

UTV: What was the starting idea for it? What is the running theme?

Aaron Ruby: The song "All Hail the Dead" is the concept that we pretty much based the rest of the record off of. That was the first idea we had. We had just so many different ways to run with it, that was just the beginning of it all. We just kept following it.

UTV: Almost like a tree type effect, you plant the root and everything shot out?

Mike Hasty: Yes, and the root idea was just that you see, and it has nothing to do with Hardcore, you see so many people acting like idiots and saying so many retarded things. Just things they shouldn't be saying, doing things they shouldn't be doing, blaming everybody else for all the problems. The world is just retarded these days. That probably is not a good word to use, but it's just so ridiculous and there are so many stupid things going on, and under all that, everybody is trying to hide it at the same time. Everyone is trying to put on a certain face for the public, and then they go and do whatever ridiculous thing, and it is everybody. It just keeps getting worse and worse all the time. That is really the root of the thing, and as Aaron said, you can take that in so many directions. From someone acting like they are Straight Edge and responsible, but yet they are Heroin junkies, or the Prom Queen turning into a porn star. Whatever the situation. You can take all that, there are so many things that lead from one thing to another, it's all based on the fact that people seem to be more conscious about--or more concerned about--what people think about them instead of how they are as people. What kind of a person they are.

UTV: There seems to be a good amount of "love lost" type songs on the record. Being in a band, being on the road all the time, do you guys find it' s hard to have relationships?

Aaron Ruby: Yeah, of course. I'm married and I just had a baby. It's really hard. I mean, my wife is awesome and completely understands. She would never want me to stop doing this, but at the same time it's stressful. It definitely puts a strain in things, but I was doing this long before I met her, and hopefully people can understand that kind of a stuff when you're in a band. It is a crazy commitment. It's not choosing one thing over another, but when you're in a band and you want to do this, you don't have a choice in a lot of things. It's not choosing to not be home, but there is no other way to do it. It can be rough. It can be rough on everybody.

Mike Hasty: It is. You definitely lose people that you care and love.

UTV: How did the Fear Factory tour go?

Mike Hasty: I don't think it went very well, to be honest with you. We haven't done a lot of tours with real Metal bands like that, but it seemed like the overall response--I don't know if they're true Metal kids--kind of a weird crowd. They've got their own thing. Whatever kids it is that they bring, they don't really seem to care about anything else other than that band, at least on that tour. Obviously, they probably have bands that they like--they didn't seem like they were too open minded and cared what was going on.

UTV: Who else was on that tour?

Mike Hasty: It was us, Sworn Enemy, and Mastodon.

UTV: That is an odd mix.

Mike Hasty: Mastodon was pretty good. They had a pretty decent crowd every night. We would do okay; the more West Coast we got, the better we did. But the whole East Coast seemed to be like Hardcore kids, or kids who knew about bands like us and Sworn Enemy didn't want to pay $20 to $25 to get in to see one or two bands. You know there is going to be a huge barrier; you know that there is going to be bouncers that are going to get into it. There is the whole difference between Hardcore and Metal kids dancing. So many people, there are just so many negatives. Then they just won't even come out. SO, I actually think we did pretty bad. I don't think we won those kids over.

UTV: Now, in contrast you're on--I don't know if they're calling it the Trustkill tour--you guys, Bleeding Through, It Dies Today, and Martyr AD [Victory]. It's a big change right?

Mike Hasty: Yeah. This is a bigger tour, it's a good package, it's a good tour. Ever night has been strong turnout. It seems like everybody is having a good time. It's also exactly opposite with the numbers. The numbers are almost the same; they are comparable. They are smaller, but comparable. From night to night with a Fear Factory show, they'll have their nights where they might draw 1200 people and we'll have our nights where we will draw 600-700 people. But for the most part, it's real close. But this is a better attitude. From the crowd to the bands, on this tour everyone just hangs out. Everyone has a good time and everyone likes each other, you watch other bands and help each other out. The Fear Factory people--not just the band, but the band and the people in the crew--were just assholes about everything.

Aaron Ruby: A couple of them were really good guys.

Mike Hasty: Not all of them were assholes, but there were enough with attitudes to wreck it for everyone else. They're just from a completely different world. It doesn't have to be like that. There is no reason to not treat someone decently. They would treat people shitty because they could, and because the way they were brought up in that whole scene; that's how you pay your dues, by being treated shitty. So as soon as they get a chance they will treat you shitty. You're supposed to be okay with that, because that's how it is. As opposed to us, where we are like, "You guys got treated like shit, and should realize it sucks, and not do it to someone else." They look at it the other way. So we had to deal with that kind of thing too. The worse it would get, the more we were supposed to suck it up to show how cool we were, as opposed to whatever they did. It wasn't really their fault. It was just how things are. X

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Audio Reviews

.22 "The Patriots" (*Roydale, www.roydale.com*). This third effort from .22 is basically a bunch of Pop-y Indie Punk with absolutely no flavor whatsoever. Not even Steve Albini's production could save this album from being the bland airplane food that it is. Overall, The Patriots comes off as a poorly executed Mission of Burma—but unfortunately, it seems they missed the point completely. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

4 Ft Fingers "A Cause For Concern" *(Go-Kart, POB 20, Prince Street Station, New York, NY 10012).* Four Brits with a So-Cal sound. Might sound boring, but, these guys are pretty damn good. These guys come off very sincere, compared to other bands in the genre that just simply rewrite Bad Religion and NOFX songs. It might be the British accent, you could get away with anything with that damn accent. Shit man, these songs are catchy as hell!(CD)-**Cyst Vicious**

7 Seconds "Take It Back, Take It On, Take it Over!" *(SideOneDummy, POB 2350, Los Angeles, CA 90078).* Is there anyone out there that hasn't heard of 7 Seconds yet? With classic releases under their belt such as *The Crew* and *Walk Together, Rock Together*, these melodic Hardcore pioneers could have sat on their laurels and enjoyed the praise of Hardcore kids for years to come. However, they chose to plow ahead, knowing in their hearts they still had something to contribute to the music scene they'd already given so much to. And with *Take It Back…*, their latest full-length, is yet another solid 17 songs worth of material, the sole problem being that it's nothing that we haven't heard from them in the last decade or so. The tracks are reasonably catchy and accompanied with a stellar recording, so this album will probably disappoint few fans; however, I guess I just expected a little more. *Take it Back…* settles into too neat a formula too early on this recording, and when dragged out over 17 tracks, it can get boring quickly. For some, the band's lack of progression from their early days may be considered a blessing, but you can only write the same song so many times. (CD)-**McClernon**

A Taste For Murder "Italian Girls (Best in the World)" *(High Fidelity, POB 1071, Grover Beach, CA 93483).* A Taste For Murder is five young dudes from Salem, Oregon that exactly duplicate 10 songs from the last Atreyu album. "Hey, if they got big, why can't we?" Well, you've got the image— tight black shirts, girl haircuts, Fidel Castro hats, and $80 denim. Your music fits the bill too. You wish you knew how to write Metal, but you're just the product of a poorly constructed Hardcore scene. When will this testosterone-fueled angry white boy trend self-destruct? You need to get drafted. (CD)-**Cain**

Across Five Aprils "Living in the Moment" *(Indianola,. 815 Gornto Rd, Valdosta, GA 31601).* You know how you "Yadda, yadda, yadda," through sex? Well you can "Yadda, yadda, yadda," right through this EP, too. It's just not important enough, and too taboo to mention. There's nothing to brag about when you've composed something entirely unoriginal. You've heard the complaining from Saves the Day. You've heard the breakdowns in every nameless pseudo-Hardcore band across the globe. You've heard every other Lifetime rip-off band. So, if you want to hear this as well, check it out. Don't get your hopes up! (CD)-**Cain**

Action Swingers "Enough Already…Live" *(Reptilian, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231).* Recorded during a 1998 performance in NYC, *Enough Already…Live* is the "last Action Swingers show" according to the liner notes of this raw, abrasive, and incendiary release. As the intimidating, mad-dog vocalist furiously screams like a criminally insane, gasoline-guzzling maniac, an unrelenting eruption of guitar, bass, and drums wreaks all-out highly flammable havoc on the attending audience. Twelve classic Action Swinger tunes are savagely unleashed at breakneck mind-blurring speeds, ultimately sounding like a gang of drunken demons channeled through a churning garbage disposal full of nails, steel bolts, and broken glass. It's a volatile, cauterizing blend of Punk and Bowery Rock as dirty, shameless, and brutal as the mean streets of New York City. Gimme more already! (CD)-**Moser**

Action Swingers "Enough Already…Live" *(Reptilian, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231).* I'm angry I missed the last live show by the Action Swingers, not only because there are 12 terrific Rock n' Roll songs on this disc, but because it took place right in our own backyard, at NYC's Continental. If this recording is any indication, the Swingers left it all on the stage that night, playing some of the best of their repertoire such as the mighty "I Don't Wanna Be This Way," and the top-notch "Waiting For My Chance." For those that got to see this show, I will privately hate you, and for those who didn't, you can curse yourselves as well, 'cause Rock n' Roll in its purest form was on the Continental's stage that night, and it's a shame it all had to come to an end. (CD)-**McClernon**

AM "Francophiles and Skinny Ties" *(American Laundromat, POB 1514, Huntington, NY 11743).* Meandering bass lines that move past straight-up rhythm playing, combined with a modern Garage-ish guitar tone and style. Being a three-piece often leads to a bass player having room to be a bit more creative, and creative is always "more gooder" (someone get the reference, please!). AM sounds like the Strokes taking their best stab at writing a Clash song. (CD)-**KevTV**

All Else Failed "This Never Happened" *(Abacus, 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250).* The band has signed to a new label. I think this makes the third straight album that appears on a different label from the album previous. This time though, it seems to have worked. This is the heaviest and most complete album All Else Failed has released. While it still features that slightly post tough guy sound from early in their career, it also features several fresh elements from the Metalcore scene of today including a much better collection of songs structurally. The CD consists of 14 tracks, and sounds like a mix between early Deadguy, Poison the Well, a bit of Bulldoze, and some Dillinger Escape Plan. There is a lot of controlled chaos on this album which is good for All Else Failed, as it helps them avoid falling into a generic drone of any one style. Here you'll find a band finally emerging from the shadows of the bigger East Coast bands to really start distinguishing themselves. (CD)-**Myk**

Amenta "Occasus" (*Listenable, BP 73, 62930 Wimereux, France*). This is a total barrage from the very opening note. The band hails from Australia, and this is the first release for Listenable, and second overall. Amenta will ring heavy with fans of Nile, Morbid Angel, Hate Eternal and Deicide. The tracks are heavy and fast with blistering blast beats throughout t. The vocals remind me a lot of Steve Tucker's and the technical chord progressions remind me of a far more interesting Nile. If you're into the newest Vital Remains record, you'll be into this. (CD)-**Myk**

Amenta "Occasus" (*Listenable, BP 73, 62930 Wimereux, France*). Hailing from the continent that brought us AC/DC, Radio Birdman and INXS (that's Australia, mate), the Amenta attack Black/Death Metal with an intensity and fury rarely seen in these modern times. Their songs are unpredictable and original, and you can actually tell them apart—it's not all blast beats and screaming (although there's plenty of both). The drummer, by the way, is one of the most insane double-kickers I've ever heard. The band also forays into Harsh Ambient Noise reminiscent of CCCC. If you love the darker extremes of Metal and the spontaneity of bands like Bad Acid Trip and Mr Bungle, you should buy this album—it's brutal. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Amon Amarth "Fate of the Norns" *(Metal Blade, 2828 Cochran St. #302, Simi Valley, CA 93065).* Amon Amarth play some of the most powerful Death Metal you'll find coming out of Sweden, if not the world. They play old style Death Metal, not the Gothenburg style that is so popular in that part of the world. They've added their own twist, though; the band has adopted the Viking mythos, and is now releasing their fifth full-length through Metal Blade. Although all of the band's albums possess the Viking background, Amon Amarth are not to be mistaken for bands like Enslaved; they haven't incorporated the music, mostly just the ideas. This is blazingly heavy Death Metal in the vein of early bands like Entombed. This album may be the band's most powerful offering to date. The guitars and bass are full and thick. The recording is warm, and the vocals are epic. Amon Amarth are a force to be reckoned with, and continue to get stronger with every release. (CD)-**Myk**

Amorphis "Far From the Sun" *(Nuclear Blast, 2323 West El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, CA 90250)*. This is my first real exposure to Amorphis bedsides a random song here or there, I'm at first taken aback by the fact that they have a singer that **sings**. I'm fairly convinced that if "Day of Your Beliefs" was played faster, it could be a Bad Religion song. Maybe I'm the nut. Come to think of it, if most of these songs were played a smidge (yea, I said "smidge") faster, the music would do a bit more for me. In consulting Rev. Ryan, who has stated "Amorphis is one of those bands that I followed for a long time and when they started to drop the ball, they became a band that I want to remember the way they were." I trust Mr. Ryan. (CD)-**KevTV**

Andy Grooms "Living Room" *(Makeshift Music, POB 40043, Memphis, TN 38174-0043)*. Bios are not only pathetic, they're downright ballsy. This guy's bio compared him to Neil Young, among other artists. I remember Dan Quayle making the mistake of comparing himself to JFK in the 1988 Vice Presidential debates. Lloyd Bentsen fired back, "I knew John Kennedy, and you, my friend, are no John Kennedy." It was much too easy a target, much like Dick Cheney's lesbian daughter. I will not stoop to the level of the demagogue. I'll just let you finish the thought. (CD)-**Thee Republicrat**

Anger Regiment "Aces and Eights" *(Bridge Nine, POB 990052, Boston, MA 02199-0052)*. Mark Porter and Bill Punch reunite on this slab of Hardcore that hearkens back to early '90s New York City. Facets of a rhythmic Burn-driven sound surface intermittently, but this EP retains some of the energy and spirit of classic Floorpunch material as well. Fond memories of those melees from times past were elicited upon hearing Porter's distinctive bellow once more. Far more expansive in scope than the concise youth-crew bludgeoning of the aforementioned outfit, Anger Regiment offer a different kind of assault—one that is comparatively sprawling, but *heavy*, nonetheless. (CD)-**Ramek**

Angry For Life "Shanks *and*" *(Vinehell, no address...)*. Melodic, driving Hardcore Punk yields surprising promise on this album. Layered hooks and elaborate vocal croons front a raging series of chord progressions, while incessantly driving rhythms propel the whole thing along very nicely. While there are tendencies towards Pop Punk noodling, Angry For Life deliver a mostly raging SoCal-style Hardcore assault. (CD)-**Ramek**

Annihilation Time *(Manic Ride, POB 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101)*. This record was released a little while back. Manic Ride Records was known as Deadalive Records then, and as the label's moniker has changed, this eight song EP is being reissued on the new imprint. This recording also came about before the band incorporated a heavy '70s Riff Rock infusion into their sound.

On their self-titled debut, Annihilation Time displayed a strong Black Flag influence. This was a testament neither to the speed addled chaos of that band's early "Nervous Breakdown" / "Six Pack" era nor their seminal *Damaged*'-era brutality, however. Instead, 20 minutes of loose, midtempo discord bearing a hefty *My War*-style flavor spewed forth. Their approach boasted lunatic tempo shifts and loose Greg Ginn-esque guitar freakouts that roared over the psychotic mutterings and howls of then-vocalist Fred Hammer (he has since been replaced). This band, more than any other in recent memory, captured the distinctive flavor of mid '80s SoCal Punk as played by the progenitors of the style. In doing so, Annihilation Time both paid tribute to those legends and unleashed distinctive and extremely well crafted songs that were unique in their own right. Fucking awesome. (CD)-**Ramek**

Another Breath "Not Now, Not Ever" *(Rivalry, POB 5242, Concord, CA 94524)*. Youth crew structure and that early '80s HC momentum are smothered in melodic sheen on this full-length from Another Breath. Streamlined in approach, the upbeat (but fairly raging) progressions and shout-along sensibilities lend spirit to the token build/breakdown scheme, nonetheless. Another Breath's sturdy, layered musicianship outfits this time-honored style with an anthemic quality heard all too seldom within this format. Not bad at all. (CD)-**Ramek**

Another Breath "Not Now, Not Ever" *(Rivalry, POB 5242, Concord, CA 94524)*. This is some pretty old-sounding Hardcore, especially considering this is a debut CD. There are eight tracks from a band that easy could have been on Conversion or New Age had those labels still been around. They remind me a lot bands I've heard come out of the Syracuse and Buffalo scenes in the past. There are really crisp-sounding guitars with a lot of cymbals in the background. The vocalist kind of reminds me of the guy from Zero Tolerance, and the complete songs remind me of the early days of Victory Records. While I won't lie and say this is the greatest thing I've ever heard, it's a decent debut and really appeals to the Hardcore fan in me; it fills that ever-widening void once filled by the old sound. I love new stuff, but it's good to hear stuff like this as well, especially if it's well done. (CD)-**Myk**

Antiseen "Dear Abby" *(TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646)*. What we have here is a blood-curdling, bone-fracturing four-song tribute to the fine art of wrestling (or "rasslin'" as it's lovingly called in the Deep South) by those big burly bad boys from Brutalsville, Antiseen. It's a "purty" baby-blue slab of vinyl, but the music is pure, unabashed primal meanness. "Dear Abby" is a venomous and intimidating studio cut from the forthcoming all-new Antiseen full-length, *Badwill Ambassadors*. "Sabu," "Funk U," and "Cactus Jack" were recorded live, loud, and lickety-split quick in 2000 and 2003. For a bad-ass, no-holds-barred rush of full-fledged sonic aggression, I profusely recommend this 7" tag-team terror in all of its nefarious, neck-twisting glory. Pretty boys need not apply! (7")-**Moser**

Any Last Words *(Havoc, POB 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408)*. Somewhat reminiscent of early Suicidal Tendencies, Any Last Words have effectively torn me a new asshole with this 7" blitz of harried Hardcore gruffness. Eight menacing auditory tantrums (four to each side) are unleashed with a wrathful fury unlike any other that's ever shredded my ears to blood-gushing bits. My hearing didn't stand a chance from the get-go. (7")-**Moser**

Arch Enemy "Dead Eyes See No Future" *(Century Media, 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250)*. This is one of those fun releases. It features one song from their latest full-length, then three live tracks. After that, the band got together and did three classic Metal covers including a Carcass song, which is significant (Arch Enemy has the ex-guitar player from Carcass, Michael Amott) since they spent so much time trying to escape that shadow. The live tracks are well-recorded and prove once and for all how good Angela's voice really is, even live. The covers are the fun part. The Carcass track ("Incarnated Solvent Abuse") is an interesting version twisted into the Arch Enemy mold. "Kill With Power" by Manowar is a gem, because it's truly more powerful than the original, and the Megadeth cover ("Symphony of Destruction") is just a truly bizarre choice. This disc isn't essential, but I recommend it for anyone who even remotely likes Arch Enemy; what's really not to like? (CD)-**Myk**

Atrocity "Atlantis" *(Napalm, POB 1983, Port Townsend, WA 98368)*. While this is the same Atrocity that I grew up with, they are far different than they once were. They were pioneers in the Death Metal scene in the late '80s and early '90s, now they are full tilt Darkwave-Goth Metal. There are still commanding blast beats and growling bottom end vocals, but there are also have clean vocals that have a late Carnivore/early Type O Negative tone to them. The guitar progressions that the band utilizes now are far more diverse than I once remember them being, and they have some well-timed keyboard use as well. Atrocity has managed to diversify their own sound without being watered down and pretentious like many of the "spooky" bands out there today. A prime example of this would be the new Sirenia album which is overly fruity and totally lacking the power of the previous release. Atrocity has recreated themselves, and have followed in the footsteps of bands like Paradise Lost, Tiamat, and My Dying Bride. *Atlantis* is a very gloomy album, and a great contribution to the Doom community. (CD)-**Myk**

BARS "Introducing..." *(Equal Vision, POB 38202, Albany, NY 12203-8202)*. Bars is a side project featuring members of Give Up the Ghost and The Hope Conspiracy. The members wanted to do an album that wasn't necessarily Hardcore or anything they did with their regular bands. They wanted to do a filthy Punk Rock record, and they have succeeded. The band has managed guitar sounds like any '70's powerhouse, but includes a real metallic and sharp-sounding effect. The band has included gang vocals on some of the choruses, and the drums sound like they could have been from a Ramones recording session. Actually, the only thing that sounds modern is the bass; it's loud and bold, and right up front in the mix. This album should appeal to fans of Hellacopters, Black Halos, Murder City Devils, and Zeke—dirty Punk Rock is what it's all about. (CD)-**Myk**

BARS "Introducing..." *(Equal Vision, POB 38202, Albany, NY 12203-8202)*. The Bars are in the unfortunate position of being considered a "Supergroup," that's trying to distinguish itself from the prior accomplishments of its lineup. Consisting of members of Hope Conspiracy and Give Up the Ghost (to name a few), Bars, while maintaining that Hardcore edge, has also incorporated a major Rock vibe into their sound—with big guitar solos to boot—which I'm sure will disappoint more than a few Hardcore elitists expecting to hear a combination of two of the bigger Hardcore acts in the past five years. Personally, I couldn't be happier with the way *Introducing...* turned out; while something different is always appreciated, the fact that this album is actually very good doesn't hurt either. From the opening Hardcore/Rock onslaught of "Bright Lights For Demise" to more midtempo, rage-inducing anthems such as "You Are My Target Audience," Bars has done something that neither Hope Con or Give Up the Ghost was able to do: create an album that holds my attention all the way through. (CD)-**McClernon**

Before Today "A Celebration of An Ending" *(Equal Vision, POB 14, Hudson, NY 12534)*. These guys have put an interesting twist on the screamo sound. They have a punkish sounding lead vocalist, but their other vocalist is bordering on Cradle of Filth style screeches at points. The music isn't your traditional Emo or Metalcore; I'd goes as far as saying these guys play a classic style Metal from around the era where hair bands started popping up. I can see the lighters in the air and a spotlight on the guitar player while the vocalist is standing on the riser directly in front of the drums. The band is far heavier in every aspect than the majority of the releases on Equal Vision in the recent past. It still, at times, moves toward overly-whiney, but then immediately kicks it up a notch. Before Today is far more interesting than a Simple Plan or any of those bands, but aren't as harsh as say, Thrice or the even heavier bands. Fans of bands like My Chemical Romance should easily dig this, and maybe even fans of bands like Every Time I Die. (CD)-**Myk**

Behemoth "Demigod" *(Olympic, 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250)*. For a couple of albums now I have been saying that Behemoth, with Vader, are heralding a Polish Death Metal movement that is second to none in the world. Once again Behemoth has proven they are just such a force, despite having a couple of line up changes. Nergal and crew, if possible, are actually reverting in sound. They have stepped back a bit from their Black Metal influences and are going for a more primal Death Metal sound, similar to that on their earliest releases. The records are better nowadays, especially with Daniel Bergstrand handling the duties on Demigod. Nergal's voice is more raw than it has been in a while, and the album resembles the earliest Florida bands like Deicide and Morbid Angel, but with more speed and far more complex song structures. The only thing keeping these guys from dominating the scene is that every time they release a brilliant album, Vader is there to at least match their ferocity. Another must own for these Polish monsters (CD)-**Myk**

Beseech "Drama" *(Napalm, POB 1983, Port Townsend, WA 98368)*. Yet again, this band's sound has morphed with their new release. Starting out as pure Goth-Metal, the band has all but eliminated the Death Metal elements; they now follow in the steps of Tiamat and Paradise Lost in writing almost danceable gothic tunes. Lotta's female vocals are very different and distinct from the rest of the scene. They are more low end, and she never hits those piercing notes that so many bands favor. She isn't operatic, which is a damn good thing; actually, at times she has the more down-trodden side of Alanis Morrisette in her voice. The band still has a Metal crunch in their guitars, it's just not the crushing power chords of old. If you are a fan of albums like Paradise Lost's *One Second* this is for you. Fans of classic bands like Skinny Puppy and En Esch may really dig this as well. I can totally imagine hearing this at the Limelight on any given Saturday. (CD)-**Myk**

Big D and the Kid's Table "How It Goes" (*Springman, POB 2043, Cupertino, CA 95015*). Isn't the Ska thing dead yet? What's worse is this band blends Ska with NOFX-style Pop Punk, which might sound good to you, but to me it's nauseating. Change the CD and grab me another PBR! (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Blood For Blood "Serenity" *(Thorp)*. The bellicose growls of class-conscious discontent are as menacing as ever, but highly questionable digressions into radio-friendly crooning and a slick production scheme dull the venomous bite that this Boston-based unit seemed capable of at their best. Still, some of their most unflinching depictions of life in the squalid projects of blue collar Boston are rendered in vivid detail here, and mid-paced Rock-fueled arrangements offer a viable alternative to the mosh-Metal that so many of their peers demonstrate. A particularly scathing anti-scene rant, the poignant "Live the Lie," stands tall amidst these songs of struggle and defeat, and rings particularly true in this modern trend-driven era. Musical shortcomings aside, this is arguably the band's most lyrically direct and perturbed record yet. All in all, *Serenity* is certainly not their best effort, but at intervals Blood For Blood offer a punishing assault, nonetheless. (CD)-**Ramek**

Boxer Rebellion *(Creep, POB 220, 252 East Market St., Westchester, PA 19382)*. Boxer Rebellion is to Reggae what the Dropkick Murphy's are to Irish music. The vocals are similar, as are many of the song structures, but instead of the Irish drinking themes of DKM, Boxer Rebellion relies on a love of Reggae and Dub. This album is very powerful and their Street Punk style is undeniable; Boxer Rebellion are fresh and fierce, and include a bunch of elements that remind me of the Hudson Falcons as well. Fans of the Hellcat label and other bands of that style (TKO Records for example) this is a new band for you to really embrace. (CD)-**Myk**

Breather Resist "Charmer" *(Jade Tree, 2310 Kennwynn Rd, Wilmington, DE 19810)*. This is as old school as a band that plays Metalcore or Math Rock (depending on what you call it) can get. Instant comparisons to Kiss It Goodbye and Deadguy come to mind from the very first note. Even the vocals sound like they could have come from Tim Singer. The chaos of the Post-Hardcore guitar riffs on this album is undeniable. This isn't what you get from today's bands. This is an amalgam of Metal and Hardcore. Basically, it's a guitar player who plays Metal incorporating some Punk Rock structure. Even the bass player gets in on the act with a breakdown solo in the second song. This is the album I wish Playing Enemy had released; it's really that good. By the way, it's totally bizarre that this album is on Jade Tree. If you're looking for a band with the Jade Tree sound, do yourself a favor and skip *Charmer* because you'll be sad if you buy it without first hearing it. (CD)-**Myk**

Broken "Homeland Security" *(Feralette, 6204 Hillsboro Rd, Nashville, TN 37215)*. It astounds me that Broken has never been given the credit they deserve, nor achieved the popularity many of the bands they've influenced throughout the years have. Hailing from Connecticut, Broken has been going strong for a decade and hasn't mellowed out one bit, though they did throw me for a loop with the use of horns on a song here. Ultra-political Crust Punk/Hardcore with a metallic edge, coupled with the searing, brash vocal stylings of Jim Martin is what Broken does best, and it amazes me that a label such as A-F hasn't been smart enough to sigh these cats up. Perhaps over the years people have forgotten about these Connecticut stalwarts, or feel that their ship has sailed, but *Homeland Security* proves they couldn't be more wrong. (CD)-**McClernon**

Bury Your Dead "Cover Your Tracks" *(Victory, 346 North Justine, Suite 504, Chicago, IL 60607)*. Bury Your Dead is heavy, very heavy. They come from the Blood For Blood meets Hatebreed school of Hardcore. They are the true tough guy Hardcore band. To the point, at times that the sound is **so** hard, that the song structures don't work. The off-times parts, while possibly intentional, sound awash in total screw ups, like the guitarist coming in late. The vocals are vicious-sounding, a cross between Jamey and Dwid from Integrity. There is a lot of the Entombed sound in these songs, which is the case with a lot of the modern heavy Hardcore bands whether they know it or not. Fans of Martyr AD, Between the Buried and Me, A Perfect Murder, Hatebreed, and Full Blown Chaos should take notice of these guys, as they will kick your ass. I've kind of lost a little patience for bands like this because I'd rather listen to Entombed, Blood For Blood and Sheer Terror, but there's no denying the blatant power harnessed on these tracks. If Bury Your Dead are this powerful live, I'm sure there are broken bones abound come the end of the set. (CD)-**Myk**

Call Me Lightning "The Trouble We're In" *(Revelation, POB 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232)*. If this isn't the most Rock n' Roll record Rev has put out, I don't know what is. Call Me Lightning mixes a spazzy Jesus Lizard vibe with a kind of straight forward Rock sound. There's also some pretty strange artwork, which includes a two headed bear/butterfly with a bear head for a crotch! (CD)-**Mr Noiz**

Cans "Beyond the Gates" *(Sanctuary, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036)*. Joacim Cans wanted to do an album that was heavier than the typical Hammerfall album. He succeeded, as *Beyond the Gates* is definitely heavier and darker than Hammerfall, but it isn't incredibly far off stylistically . Death Metal fans won't be knocking down the door to pick up this album, but on the flipside, Hammerfall fans won't be running in terror. Cans put together a band that consists of Mat Sinner, Stefan from Hammerfall, Metal Mike from Halford and a member of Fates Warning because he wanted to do some side music. This is far from the Mrs. Hippie project from a couple of years ago; *Beyond the Gates* is a solid, far more structured album that consists of classic-sounding Metal, in the same sense that Hammerfall or Primal Fear is classic-sounding. This is old style with a modern upgrade, and Joacim has avoided the flowery crap that comes from so many Power Metal bands these days. I'm not saying this is *Legacy of Kings*, but it's a very enjoyable album. If I had to pick a band it most sounds like, I'd say older Accept. (CD)**-Myk**

Canvas Solaris "Sublimation" *(Tribunal, POB 49322, Greensboro, NC 27449).* Alright. Finally I have it. For the last bunch of years people have been throwing around the term "metallic Free Jazz" to describe anything they couldn't figure out, or had horns, or odd progressions. For the most part it was bullshit from people with their heads up their asses, or they heard someone else use the term and jumped on the bandwagon. That was, until Canvas Solaris came about. This truly **is** Metallic Free Jazz, with epic-length jam songs and level of talent that makes Iceburn looks like elementary kids. While at times this album does have solid song structures, some of the improvs on this are monumental. This is the kind of album that Ron Noiz would rave about, and the rest of us would take out of the player after one track. This is similar to a metallic version of Don Caballero, but requires far more patience. I'm annoyed because these guys are so talented. I'm not feeling it, but I know this album is special. Art Rock fans unite and rejoice, because this album is your new banner to march behind. (CD)**-Myk**

Cerberus Shoal *(North East Indie, POB 10315, Portland, ME 04104).* To celebrate the 10 year anniversary of their existence, Cerberus Shoal decided to re-release their self-titled debut, which previously only available on vinyl. If you're familiar with the Cerberus Shoal's's current sound, it's nothing like the sound of the young band on this recording , which could be lumped into the early '90's Post-Hardcore thing (think Hoover meets Rodan). I'm not sure if there's any bonus material or not since I haven't heard this record since my turntable busted; one track is 39 minutes long. Awesome. (CD)**-Mr Noiz**

Cerebus Shoal *(North East Indie, POB 222, Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107).* Cerebus Shoal are very lo-fi, quiet and cool. They sound almost improvised, as if they were just writing songs in a Bostonian basement for the sake playing. It's somewhat poetic and effeminate while expressing polite anger at random points. Songs range from three minutes in length to forty minutes in length, a total of six tracks. This was written in 1995 and re-released recently from vinyl to CD. For fans of Still Life and Iconoclast and other like extreme Punk outfits. (CD)**-Cain**

Champion "Promises Kept" *(Bridge Nine, POB 990052, Boston, MA 02199-0052).* This is one of the most slick sounding productions of '88 style youth crew I have ever heard. Northwestern sXe unit Champion offer a truly massive sound on this full-length. *Promises Kept* builds upon the relatively by-the-books format the band captured previously, but where past recordings were somewhat streamlined in terms of the overall tone achieved, this record offers a more complex and detailed musical scheme that is nevertheless confined within the regimented parameters of Straight Edge Hardcore. Layers of harmonic riffing and thunderous shout-alongs coat this brawny Hardcore backbone, and though the vocal work and dogmatic lyricism aren't exactly what one might call novel, the intricacy of the musicianship, and a good sense of structure (awesome build/breakdown transitions, and some impressive time signature changeups) produce an unusually consistent take on the classic Straight Edge format. (CD)**-Ramek**

Champion "Promises Kept" *(Bridge Nine, POB 990052, Boston, MA 02199 0052).* **GO!** I feeling like I've been sent back to 1991 all over again. I feel a lot like I'm back in Boston for a Saturday Matinee at Middle East. I feel like this is the band that goes on before Strife and Outspoken. There is a lot of Judge going on in this band. There is a hint of Youth of Today in the guitar sound. Champion totally reminds me of Wide Awake at their best. There are a lot of bands, a lot of places and a lot of people that this band reminds me of. These are all great memories, but this band **isn't** a memory; it's the Here and Now, and they are truly bringing it back. Fans of the Youngblood label must check this out. (CD)**-Myk**

China White "Addiction.2" *(Malt Soda, POB 7611 Chandler, AZ 85246).* I've never heard of this band before. For those of you who are familiar with the Endangered Feces, China White, for some reason, reminds me of them. There' s a heavy Punk guitar sound with chops to boot...oh yeah, that's why they remind me of the Feces. For you China White fans, apparently this is a re-release of their 1995 release *Addiction*. The CD also includes two unreleased songs as well as a live show from 2003. The show sounds pretty good, especially their version of "Ace of Spades," which very well could be the Street Rock version of "Freebird."(CD)**-Thee Republicrat**

Chuck Bettis and Friends "Community of Commotion" *(North East Indie, POB 10315, Portland, ME 04104).* Comparing this to a popular and current laptop-produced release, this is more bizarre than the new Bjork album, *Medulla*. Not to say it comes close to being compared to the genius of Bjork, but, you know—laptop. There are 13 contributors to this album, which is to be described more as sound art than actual music. To listen to this on headphones is to hear and dissect every element on each track. Songs consist of spoken poetry about menstruation in abundance over synthesized, piercing noises while instruments like wine bottles are used. You'll hear everything from horrifying Techno to what sounds like a murder; it's no surprise this came out of Brooklyn. (CD)**-Cain**

Classical Ass "After Lunch We Kill Tony" (*Diaphragm, POB 10388, Columbus, OH 43201*). Classical Ass are an arty Noise Punk band that owe a lot to the '90s Midwestern Noise Punk scene in general and the Steve Albini bands in particular. That's not a bad thing, mind you. In fact, I'm quite pleased with this CD, which blends the Albini Big Black/Shellac thing with the insanity of the God Bullies, the punch of the Jesus Lizard and even the humor of the Dead Kennedys into a cohesive unit of twisted cacophony. This one will occupy my CD player for a long time. (CD)**-chuck.foster**

Cold Sweat *(Manic Ride, POB 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101).* Just as those bands that adhered to the Power Violence moniker served as a somewhat unheralded but visceral alternative to the mediocrity of much of early '90s Hardcore, so too does Cold Sweat prove an equally scarce but unsettling alternate to the pre-packaged Emo/Pop/Metal currently passing as Hardcore.

This record is a loose, psychotic, wholly engrossing mess. Almost Void-esque in jumbled presentation, the percussion and guitar squall brought to the fore is eternally on the brink of collapse. Maxed out production assures a feedback soaked, jittery free-for-all. Cold Sweat draw their sound partially from the Prog-y experimentation of a host of later SST-acts (late Flag/Gone/Saccharine Trust), and, at intervals, facets of the jackhammer dissonance of early Swans, but fuse that trained chaos with the guttural aggression of the Crossed Out/No Comment camp. The results are notably ugly and disturbing. This band succeeds in offering something near unheralded in modern Hardcore: genuine ingenuity. Very highly recommended. (CD)**-Ramek**

Converge "You Fail Me" *(Epitaph, 2798 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90026).* There is no denying the effect that this band has had on the Hardcore scene as we know it, so it's no surprise to see them take another step to the forefront with a label switch to Epitaph. The band is still chaotic and powerful, and Bannon's vocals are still painfully induced, but I think an extended break has taken its toll just a bit. While the album is still compelling, I don't believe it is the force that was *Jane Doe*; *You Fail Me* seems to be comparatively restrained—which, trust me, is hard to say because these progressions are all over the place. What you have here is *South of Heaven* after *Reign In Blood*. It's good. It's **really** good, but it just isn't the band's best, and they may never live up to their best, but can go on releasing brilliant albums nonetheless. After all, Converge could have gone the way of Cave-In and released pompous, boring pseudo-Rock records. (CD)**-Myk**

The Creeping Nobodies "Stop Movement, Stop Loss" *(www.thecreepingnobodies.com).* The Creeping Nobodies bring us mildly interesting, organ-driven Rock n' Roll, very lo-fi. There's the occasional decent track, but overall, this is not really worth spinning again. (CD)**-McClernon**

Cult of Luna "Salvation" *(Earache, 43 West 38th St., 2nd Fl, New York, NY 10018).* Atmospheric and moody music with peaks and valleys, Cult of Luna plays well outside the confines of any genre. Their music displays traits found in bands like Isis and Neurosis, but comparing them to other bands doesn't do the music justice. Playing sludgy, Doom-based, plodding riffs that go from distortion-filled to single notes, Cult of Luna can write some long songs that don't get boring—not an easy accomplishment. The more I listen to this, the more I feel that this disc sets the mood for some grisly horror movie scene. Music that evokes disturbed images like that is certainly setting a mood, which is damn cool with me. An interesting and gutsy band, Cult of Luna have no problem being different, the way it should be. (CD)**-KevTV**

Cult of Luna "Salvation" *(Earache, 43 West 38th St., 2nd Fl, New York, NY 10018).* This is one epic recording. *Salvation* reminds me entirely of Neurosis. They aren't as heavy, and the instruments aren't as extreme as some of those used by Neurosis to create a tribal feel, but the vibe and the vocals on this album are **so** there. I'll go as far as saying that *Salvation* is better than any Neurosis album since *Times of Grace*. Thundering bass chords, off-time drum situations and acoustic guitars all combine to make a really atmospheric and heavy album. Had Tribes of Neurot sounded like this it would have been so much better. Cult of Luna is picking up the heavy end of what Neurosis was getting at, and with the huge cast of members this band has, they are pulling it off without loops or sacrificing one instrument for another. Cult of Luna is the next generation. (CD)**-Myk**

Damnation "Destructo Evangelia" *(Candlelight US, POB 707, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462)*. This is one of those bands that seems to cultivate mystique. Supposedly, Damnation features members of Entombed and Merciless. What it is, is Black Metal. From the front cover to the back, and through the sound, they are really trying to recreate the late '80's Black Metal sound of Darkthrone and Bathory, including a cover of the track "Armageddon." From what I read, the band has been around since 1989 with a bunch of demos, but this is their first full-length. The songs aren't bad, but they tried a little too hard to get that tin can sound; it sounds a little muddy. The only band that's really recaptured this sound is Warhammer, and they were going for the Hellhammer sound. The devout Black Metal horde that believes the scene has sold out may take interest in this, especially if Damnation has been floating around the demo trading scene. If you're really into old Black Metal, I would suggest the new Darkthrone first. (CD)**-Myk**

Darkthrone "Sardonic Wrath" *(Moonfog/End, 331 Rio Grande #58, Salt Lake City, UT 84101)*. There are things you can count on in life, like death and taxes. You might as well add Darkthrone to that list. You can count on them putting out the nastiest-sounding record of the year and you can count on them sounding like it's still 1986 during a Bathory recording session. They are fast as hell, the recordings are vicious sounding, and it's an all out assault of true Norwegian Black Metal; Nocturno Culto and Fenriz only know how to play one way when they are doing a Darkthrone record. I can't really say too much about this. It sounds like a Darkthrone album. If you are looking for *Soulside Journey* you might be outta luck, but if you want anything from *Transylvania Hunger* to *Hate Them*, you'll kill for this. If by some crazy stretch of the imagination you don't know of Darkthrone, if you like Bathory, Mayhem, Celtic Frost, Burzum, Immortal or Carpathian Forest you'll be good. Hail the true harbingers of Metal! (CD)**-Myk**

Decontrol "The Final War" *(Hardcore Holocaust, www.hardcoreholocaust.com)*. It's amazing how some of the finest bands in Hardcore and Punk seem able to adopt an oft-imitated approach, and, without radically altering the makeup of that format, make music of distinctive ingenuity and power. To wit: Canada's Decontrol play a highly regimented form of "D-beat" Hardcore that unabashedly recalls seminal Discharge in terms of meandering pace, three chord-driven bludgeoning, and dogmatic "haiku"-esque apocalyptic lyricism. The essential ingredients are present, but the brunt of this record proves incredibly distinctive and visceral. Their most formidable effort production-wise, Decontrol's Dis-approach is heightened significantly by a dark, atmospheric attention to detail. Every facet of their simple, albeit crushing, offensive is doused in expansive aural grit that underscores the war-torn vibe throughout. Awash in low end disorder and punctuated by inhuman howls, *The Final War* is an aptly foreboding testament to these troubled times. (LP)**-Ramek**

The Deep Eynde "Shadowland" *(Disaster, POB 7112, Burbank, CA 91510)*. Every so often a song comes along and deeply embeds itself within my conscious, giddily stirring up all kinds of lively, euphoric feelings in me. "Suicide Drive" is one such song, and it grandly kick-starts *Shadowland*, one of the most solidly rockin' releases of 2004. The Deep Eynde cook up a spooky, raucous, and delightfully ghoulish blend of Goth Punk sounds that could only be conjured by the leather-clad, flesh-eating zombies from *The Return of the Living Dead*. Hell, they just might even be the vampiric, blood-guzzling sons of TSOL, DI, The Misfits, and Agent Orange, as well, since each of these bands seem to receive an obvious nod of sonic recognition on this here platter of full-throttle scariness. It's a dark, decadent, and frightfully fun journey into a fantastically macabre underworld strewn with skulls, switchblades, red-eyed bats, cast-iron crucifixes, and clanking chains. In *Shadowland*, haunted souls are revered, and every night is Halloween. Indeed, debauched midnight shenanigans in the graveyard have never sounded so tempting and good! (CD)**-Moser**

Defiance "Against the Law" *(Punk Core, POB 916, Middle Island, NY 11953)*. Studded leather jackets, disheveled spiky hair, and a whole world of corrosive, riot-inspiring attitude. Hell yeah, Defiance takes an armory full of cocked-and-loaded Old School Punk insolence and meshes it with a scouring blend of unrelenting Hardcore fury. Three songs and seven inches of brutal, bone-crushing rage. Jump in the pit with your arms a-flailing, or shut up and die already. (7")**-Moser**

Dillinger Escape Plan "Miss Machine" *(Relapse, 1720 State Rd., Upper Darby, PA 19082)*. So, what happens to the best-known Math Rock band in the world when it loses its lead vocalist? It gets a new vocalist, takes its time, and then unleashes a volatile album that will have people scratching their heads as to how they could ever question a different outcome. *Miss Machine* is probably DEP's most diverse release ever. Granted, the EP with Mike Patton was bizarre, but that was a guest stint and I believe he wrote a good chunk of that stuff. New vocalist Greg Puciato is well up to the task of leading this band forward into the future. His vocal range is good; he goes from the typical Metalcore growl to clean vocals, and even has some Carcass -style screeches. The real issue here is the song structures; they're so precise and off-kilter that I think listeners may actually get lost. This is the equivalent of a Free Jazz album for the Hardcore scene. The tracks are all over the place. The song parts jump around like kids playing hopscotch, and the restrained chaos of the past is on the verge of erupting out of control. If the members of Dillinger Escape Plan are able to keep creating while sitting atop this powder keg, they have the potential to throw the music scene on its ear; if the band implodes, this is the clear pronouncement as to how far is too far to go. You've never heard the likes of what is going on in this album, and you may never again. The limited edition of this CD comes with a bonus DVD of live recordings and video of recording sessions. (CD)**-Myk**

Dio "Master of the Moon" *(Sanctuary, 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036)*. I love this man. He is in his 60s and still rocking out. He started doing Metal some 32 years ago, and I hope that I'm half as passionate at his age. But this album just isn't good. It's dull and mellow far too often; much like the new Dokken album, it just never gets up and going. It's like Adult Contemporary Metal played for all the people who are now old and weekend metalheads. RJD is capable of so much more than this, and with people like Simon Wright, Craig Goldy and Rudy Sarzo in the band, this record should just rock out; instead, it's just too self-indulgent. Ronnie's voice is still massive, but these songs have him very monotone for the majority of the record. The last album was much better, and more indicative of what this Metal legend is truly capable of. This pains me, like *Angry Machines* pained me. (CD)**-Myk**

Discipline "Saints and Sinners" *(Knock Out, Postfach 100716, 46527 Dinslaken, Germany)*. Discipline gruffly snarls with a rampaging, bully-boy edge on this here blistering piece of pure white vinyl. It's melodic Hardcore Street Punk that's steeped deep in the brawlin', ale-guzzlin' spirit of bloodied fists, cracked jawbones, and swaggering alleyway hooliganism. Pints up and down the hatch! (LP)**-Moser**

The Donnas "Gold Medal" *(Atlantic… available at every mall in Anytown, USA)*. Here's a rather simplistic equation for you: The Donnas + *Gold Medal* = Pure Fun-Filled Rock n' Roll! On this, their sixth full-length release, the vibrantly rockin' Donna gals have mastered a more polished and more mature sound without losing one ounce of the youthful vivaciousness and abundantly energetic enthusiasm that adorned all of their previous audio offerings. Brett Anderson's vocals are as sweet, sassy, and sultry as ever, but inflected with a biting, almost bitter, edge that makes the ears stand at attention as soon as the first lyric is unleashed. Allison Robertson powerfully manipulates the six strings of her guitar in a fiery, colorfully opulent show of crunchy, gut-twisting rhythms and soaring, red-hot leads. Maya Ford mercilessly slaps and pummels her bass like a full-fledged brimstone-breathing goddess of thunder. And Torry Castellano proficiently attacks the drum kit as if her very life depends upon it, wildly smashing and bashing away in a blurring flurry of eight-armed madness. *Gold Medal* is destined to become a classic with its jubilant hooks, endearing melodies, and flesh-tingling harmonies, guaranteed to entice and energize the listener to the brink of orgasmic glee. The Donnas have effectively melted my heart like butter on a hot biscuit. Too damn delicious for mere words! (CD)**-Moser**

Doug Gillard "Salamander" *(Pink Frost/Big Takeover, 249 Eldridge St. #14, New York, NY 10002)*. The debut solo album from the Guided By Voices guitar-slinger incorporates elements from GBV, as well as hints of Beatles pop and even Elliot Smith on the more somber compositions, such as "Present." In all, *Salamander* is very reminiscent of Jason Lowenstein of Sebadoh's own solo record released last year, in that is quite versatile and documents an artist experimenting within his own sound, and learning song by song what works and what doesn't. Fortunately for Gillard, much of what he does here works well, so most fans of his previous efforts won't be disappointed. (CD)-**McClernon**

The Ducky Boys "Three Chords and the Truth" *(Thorp, POB 6786, Toledo, OH 43612).* It's been six years since the last Ducky Boys album, and the wait has been far too long. The good news is that, much like the wait for the new Social D. album, it was most assuredly worth it. The time that has elapsed between their last recorded material in 1998 and now has only given the Boys time to refine their sound, tweak their lineup, and create s16 of the catchiest Rock n' Roll tunes you'll hear all year. The Ducky Boys owe a lot to Social D. as far as their overall sound goes, and while trying not to overdo comparisons to the latter band , what's so great about the latest albums from **both** bands is that they didn't try to do anything other than create wonderful Rock albums— no more, no less, regardless of the hype, time elapsed, or pressure on them to do anything other than that. This is the best these Boston lads have ever sounded, and it's about time they get the credit and respect they deserve. If this album doesn't do it for them, nothing will. (CD)-**McClernon**

The Ends "Concrete Disappointment" *(Dirtnap, POB 21249, Seattle, WA 98111).* Obviously full of booze, pills, snot, and snarling "so what" attitude, The Ends rock up a ruckus in the scruffy, spiky-haired tradition of the Sex Pistols, The Heartbreakers, The Riffs, and The Stitches. *Concrete Disappointment* is the band's second full-length musical melee, and it's one of the most explosive and exciting assaults of sleazed-out, Bowery-style junkie Punk I've ever in my life witnessed. The vocalist drunkenly slurs the frantically paced lyrics in a raspy, insolent show of sneering defiance. The instrumental accompaniment is a rhythmic volley of abrasive and menacing power chords, trashy screaming guitar leads, romping-stomping bass riffs, and a steady, battering clamor of drumbeats. It carves at the heart like a razor-sharp switchblade knife, drawing tainted blood and immorally ravenous results along the way. Everything else in this fucked-up world is plastic and diluted, and we're all going to die anyway, but The Ends will surely rock us into infamy. (CD)-**Moser**

Ethan Daniel Davidson "Better Living Through Creative Selling" (*Times Beach, 118 East Seventh St., Royal Oak, Michigan 48067*). Ethan Daniel Davidson was born to members of John Sinclair's White Panther Party and was then adopted by rich Republicans, so the story goes. Makes sense: he grew up to be a protest singer in the Folk tradition. I'm not talking Peter, Paul and Mary here—Ethan's songs have the sneering sarcastic bite of the young Roy Harper. In this offering, he puts Middle Eastern sounds to some use alongside basic Blues and straight up Folk. One track called "Terrorist" is a beat poem about a Jewish Freedom Fighter from WWII who describes herself as a terrorist; true story, apparently. You don't have to play sub-Slayer riffs badly to be a protest musician. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Evan Emge "Along Came A Guitar" *(Orange Peel, POB 15207, Fremont, CA 94539).* I wonder if this guy is able to vote; he could be retarded. Sorry, that was a little mean spirited. Mr. Emge performs acoustic songs that are supposed to be funny. Here are some titles: "Boobies," "Poppin' Cherries" and "Eleventeen," just to name a few. I hate to discourage anybody from doing anything, but somebody should let this guy know that he's just not funny. Sorry. (CD)-**Thee Republicrat**

Evergreen Terrace "At Our Worst" *(Hand of Hope, POB 24913, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307).* Hand of Hope is a new label co-founded by one of the guys in Evergreen Terrace, and this is the label's first release. It features a live set including a Smashing Pumpkins cover and the band's original demo. Evergreen Terrace is one of my favorite bands on the Eulogy label, and this showcases the power that they can direct live. The band should appeal to fans of Nora, Walls of Jericho, A Static Lullabye and the like. Granted, this release is really for the diehards, but it's a nice holdover until their new full-length is finally released. It does feature on unreleased track though, even though it happens to be live. The quality for a live recording is really good, especially since a Hardcore band usually isn't set up for live recording the way a Metal band would be. I highly recommend all this band's releases, *At Our Worst* included. (CD)-**Myk**

Fang "Live Cheap" *(Malt Soda, POB 7611, Chandler, AZ 85246).* This is a pretty poorly recorded live performance from one of the most infamous Punk bands ever, Fang. With a singer who had been incarcerated on more than one occasion (if memory serves me correctly), Fang's gritty Punk Rock has always been bitter and scathing, representing life after hitting rock bottom. But don't think the band doesn't have a romantic side— the vocalist dedicates "Suck and Fuck" to his girlfriend; if that ain't love, I don't know what is. A great band to be sure, but this CD isn't an exact representation of how good this band really is. (CD)-**McClernon**

Fear Before the March of Flames "Art Damage" *(Equal Vision, POB 38202, Albany, NY 12203).* I don't know if they have done any damage to the art world, but Fear Before the March of Flames' Blood Brothers meets the Locust and Dillinger Escape Plan sound has done some damage to my ears. By that, I don't mean that this is bad, it's just incredibly loud and raucous in all the right places. While I'm not entirely hip to the math-rock sound, which I think this could be described as, these guys pull it off more than adequately, with kudos to the guitarist for stretching his creative juices to the limit, coming with some terrific guitar patterns, keeping this album interesting from beginning to end. (CD)-**McClernon**

Fighting Chance "Sacrifice and Struggle" *(Insurgence, 2 Bloor St. W. Suite 100-184 ,Toronto, ON, M4W 3E2 Canada).* I was so ready to write these guys off as another generic Hardcore band, but I couldn't be more wrong. Although the music isn't the most exciting, the lyrics got me. Fighting Chance sing about the insanity and ridiculousness of Holy War, racism, the IMF, and the struggle of immigrants in America. *Sacrifice and Struggle* is a good pick for you Hardcore kids looking for something new. (CD)-**Cyst Vicious**

Flashlight Arcade "The Art of Blacking Out" (*On the Rise, POB 2471, Westfield, NJ 07091*). Well, it's not the worst Emo I've ever heard, but it certainly ain't the best, either. Why don't you go cry about it. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Floorian "What the Buzzing" *(Bomp, POB 7112, Burbank, CA 91510). What the Buzzing* is a spacey, tripped-out sonic sojourn into an alternate universe where a swirling mist of shimmering guitar rhythms guides the listener into a trance-like state of spiritual nirvana. Dreamy, otherworldly vocals majestically meander throughout the mix while radiantly hypnotic bass lines and meticulously plodding drum fills beautifully flow in a splendorous show of supreme unison. A near constant solar burst of intergalactic hallucinatory guitar leads, weeping extra-terrestrial feedback, and other abundantly arousing audio stimuli rises above the heavenly din and leaves the listener feeling as if he or she has inhaled a reality-altering hit of pure opium deep into the lungs. Like Rain Parade, Spacemen 3, and *A Saucerful of Secrets*-era Pink Floyd before them, Floorian makes astral music of hazy dreams while sweetly tumbling through the stratosphere. A-floating away on the clouds I now shall go. (CD)-**Moser**

Flowers In the Attic *(Reptilian, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231).* Raging, chaotic Thrashcore with crustier undertones plows forth on this six song effort. This squalid exhibition engenders a wall of blasting percussion and cacophonous riff stew that recalls hints of some early Great American Steak Religion projects (One Eyed God Prophecy, Uranus), and the sharp, noise-addled melody of early Orchid. Unpredictable time signatures range from blistering burn to cathartic drone while a disheveled mess of bestial screeches hurl these tirades along at a numbing pace. Harsh and recommended. (CD)-**Ramek**

Forced Reality "Unheard, Unreleased, and Under the Boot" *(Thorp, POB 6786, Toledo, OH 43612).* This is a collection of unreleased tracks and rare B-sides of one of the last true American Oi! bands. While they've since broken up (the lead vocalist is now fronting Metalcore faves 100 Demons), Forced Reality were quite popular at a time when Skinhead Rock was not popular at all. While the Bruisers were at the forefront of the American movement, Forced Reality was not far behind. If you're a fan of the Bruisers or some of the English Oi! such as The Business or Cockney Rejects, you could do worse than giving this a shot. While I don't think it's as good as the aforementioned bands, if you're into songs about drinking hard and having pride in being an American that don't come off as racist, then you'll probably wanna give this a spin. (CD)-**McClernon**

Fort Ancient "I Believe In Tornadoes" *(Fort Ancient, 397 Flatbush Ave. #2F, Brooklyn, NY 11238).* This four-song disc is a combination of Deathcab for Cutie/Postal-type material along with some of the slower Sig Transit Gloria tunes coupled with a heavy keyboard-driven 80's influence ala The Cars. While the tunes represented here are actually quite good, I'd be hesitant to try and sit through a full-length's worth of material such as this, though Fort Ancient might surprise me, such as they did here. (CD)-**McClernon**

The Freeze "Token Bones" *(Dr. Strange, POB 1058, Alta Loma, CA 91701).* It's not very often that a compilation of this furiously flailing magnitude comes along, but when it does, ya better take cover quick and kiss your sorry ass goodbye for keeps. *Token Bones* collects 30 lip-curling, bile-tinged songs from 1980 through 1996, proving once and for all that The Freeze were one of the most sonically ferocious Punk bands to ever lay waste to the East Coast (via Boston). It's a thermonuclear maelstrom of muscular, menacing, and abundantly awe-inspiring Old School Punk of which Black Flag, Circle Jerks, Descendents, Reagan Youth, Doggy Style, and The Chiefs were capable of unleashing back in the day. Indeed, *Token Bones* is the kind of powerfully insurrective release that should be loudly blaring out of a secondhand ghetto blaster when next you hang out with your skate buddies and guzzle several 40-ounce bottles of lukewarm malt liquor in a vacant, graffiti-defiled house. Crank it up, and watch the dilapidated surroundings vaporize before your bewildered eyes. (CD)-**Moser**

Fucked Up "Litany" *(Test Pattern, 74 Irving St. #2 New Haven, CT 06551).* Canada's Fucked Up are one of the best bands around. In many respects, they are to Rock and Roll what the Dicks were to the Blues. Massive, melodic Hardcore Punk *Rock* plows forth, layered and intricate but always raging. In this world of Emo-refuse and Metal pablum, Fucked Up are endowed with a quality criminally scarce: that of true innovation. The band's anthems pack a wallop while offering creative structuring and instrumentation that never succumbs to self-indulgence or posturing. Lyrically, the band tackles an assortment of societal woes with wit and venom.

Their explosive sound, coupled with a rare aesthetic sense and a penchant for memorable live performances, has garnered a small but fiercely dedicated following. From early, more concise eruptions (documented on their split with Haymaker on Deep Six Records) to their expansive work on the *No Pasaran* and stellar *Police* 7"s (Deranged Records), the band has spawned a powerful legacy.

The band's subsequent releases are as striking as their earlier work, and *Litany*, the fifth 7" from Fucked Up, is certainly no exception to the rule. This recording hearkens back to an earlier recording session, but proves as consistent as any in the band's rapidly growing repertoire. Songs of interpersonal alienation and workplace desolation ring out, from the harrowing "What Could Have Been" to the scathing "Colour Removal," and the acrimonious title track. I have yet to hear a collection of songs that more aptly sum up the frustration, loneliness and monotony inherent in the modern workplace existence. Excellent. For those without a record player, be sure to pick up the band's compilation CD entitled *Epics In Minutes* on Deranged Records—you won't regret it. (7")-**Ramek**

Full Minute of Mercury "Summer Sampler '04" (*FMHg, 3161 N 21st St., Arlington, VA 22201*). Well, you can't blame them for trying. Full Minute of Mercury blend Iron Maiden-style Metal with Indie Pop and Pop Punk, which is an interesting idea until you hear the outcome. The only saving grace is that there are three hot chicks in the band, although the female vocalist completely lacks any emotion in her delivery. Eh. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Funeral For A Friend "Casually Dressed and Deep In Conversation" *(Ferret, 167 Wayne St. # 409, Jersey City, NJ 07302).* I, for one, am not on the bandwagon. These guys are fine musicians and some of their songs are really strong, but all this "the Brits are gonna show the Americans how to play American music" is a load. They only get all this hype because they are from the UK, and the UK eats stuff like this up. Funeral For A Friend may be the best across the pond, but I don't think it applies here. Bands like Hopesfall, A Static Lullabye, and Anterrabae are all better. The vocals are fine, but I think the screams are forced into the songs too much, getting jammed in just to sound Screamo. These guys remind me of the Reunion Show in that it was just so forced to be clever and trendy. This is starting to be a really tedious style of music to listen to because there are so many bands playing it, and no matter how good they are it's very hard to be distinctive. (CD)-**Myk**

Goatsnake "1 + Dog Days" *(Southern Lord, POB 291967, Los Angeles, CA 90029).* This is a re-issue of two older, out of print releases. They both seem to be remastered and the disc also features a bonus track, "Knucklebuster." You will not find a better Doom band in the world than Goatsnake. They are slow as molasses but still manage to carry a melody , and have a vocalist that has grace in his pitch changes. This is the last step before a Doom band gets to the ridiculous levels of non-structure ala Grief. But the real truth is, you can't beat these two albums for the price of one. This is like an 80 minute disc of pure gloom that will be loved and cherished by any fans of the Obsessed, Saint Vitus, or Spirit Caravan. This is a true gem available once again. (CD)-**Myk**

Goblet "Enter the Realm" (*Goblet, www.GobletWillRockYourCocksOff.com*). Wow. This CD is a work of genius my mind can only begin to fathom. Fuck Tenacious D, Goblet is the ultimate in Satanic Metal mangling. They remind me a lot of the Teenage PhDs (who had a track called "Punk Rock Is Dead" on one of the later *Killed By Death* volumes) as well as the Two Felipes and my band, Pope Goat VII. That probably doesn't tell you anything, so think Gwar as a couple of mushroom-eating freaks that listened to the Butthole Surfers until their brains spilled out of their ears. You know it's got to be good with song titles like "Maximum Pretention" and "Unicorns Are Gay". Like I said, wow. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Grails "Red Light" *(Neurot, POB 410209, San Francisco, CA 94141).* Grails is exactly the kind of record I would expect from Neurot Recordings; unequaled originality with a hint of mysticism, and a dark atmosphere that makes you feel like you're sitting all by yourself on the moon or something. Fans of bands like Xysma or Trial of the Bow will recognize the minimalist ingenuity of this release. More melodic than a Tribes of Neurot record, *Red Light* reminds me of something one may find on the Hypnos or Soleilmoon label. Ambient World Music is what this strikes me as, but it's unfair to classify something like this that's so unto itself. (CD)-**Myk**

Greenlawn Abbey (*Diaphragm, POB 10388, Columbus, OH 43201*). Here we have a bland—excuse me—**band** that sounds like the Replacements and Soul Asylum watered down to the point of being tasteless. Nothing stands out, nothing happens— it's all just sorta generic and mediocre and boring, like they're going through the motions. Why bother? (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Hanzel und Gretyl "Scheissmessiah" *(Metropolis, POB 54307, Philadelphia, PA 19105).* I didn't like the last album this band released. I also don't think much of bands that use Nazi atmosphere and symbolism for shock value (this seems to be rampant in the Techno-Industrial field) so this band had a lot to overcome in my mind. Half of the album is in German, so I can only guess what the lyrics actually are, but the album title has two sets of double "s"s that look a lot like SS logos. The photo of the band shows a member wearing a WWI German helmet and they all have red armbands on, although they look to have pentagrams and not Swastikas (but you get the imagery). Basically, you have a cross between Ministry and Rammstein (another band questioned for their beliefs on numerous occasions). The album is heavy, a lot heavier than their last album, and most of the Industrial stuff I've heard lately. The album is supposed to be a concept album about Hell from *Dante's Inferno*, so I will have to take their word for it. Fans of *The Mind Is A Terrible Thing*-era Ministry are in for a treat. So are fans of "Du Hast," but I find myself questioning these guys more than I do listening to the music. Negative publicity is not always better than no publicity. I'm not shocked, but if they **are** Nazis they can kiss my ass. (CD)-**Myk**

The Haunted "rEVOLVEr" *(Century Media, 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250).* So, Peter is back in the Haunted. What are we in for? Well, we're in for one of the most punishing records of the year. Like there was a doubt? Granted, the album is not the 1000% furious Thrash attack that comprised some of the bands earliest offerings; it is a much more mature arsenal they deliver on *rEVOLVEr.* Thrash does not seem to be the Metal of choice these days, but the Haunted give a compelling argument for returning to the ways of the late '80s. At times you can close your eyes and think of half a dozen Combat bands that would pull riffs like these, and then you realize that the Haunted are three times as good as those bands. The Haunted continue to prove album after album that they are the band setting the pace; either you keep up or you fall behind. Few bands one up them. (CD)-**Myk**

Hecate Enthroned "Redimus" *(Candlelight US, POB 707, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462).* This is one band that will never surprise you. Their albums are never any better or worse than the previous effort, and the packaging for their music are always beautiful. The band sounds like *Vempire*-era Cradle of Filth and features people who at one time were members of Cradle, so that isn't much of a stretch. Hecate Enthroned just continue to release very symphonic sounding Black Metal, and they do it very well. The band does manage to avoid a large amount of the absurdity that Cradle achieves, which is a good thing. Hecate Enthroned has stuck to their guns and their sound. They're from the UK and have that early UK Black Metal sound. If you like *Vempire* or *Principal of Evil…* you'll most likely like this—especially is you like early Dimmu Borgir as well. If you think either of the aforementioned bands should be burned alive for being false, then don't waste your money here—you'll hate it. (CD)-**Myk**

Hellshock "Only the Dead Know the End of War" *(Hellshock, POB 2626, Portland, OR 97208)*. The Bolt Thrower comparisons seem unavoidable, but this band's strength lies not simply in an adherence to an early-Earache Death Metal/Thrash format, but rather in an ability to combine aspects of that surly sound with epic, charged crust ala Amebix and Axegrinder. A nice middle-ground between those two realms collide on *Only the Dead Know the End Of War*, a step up from the band's formative 7" on the Whisper In Darkness label. Neither distinctly Punk nor Metal, this recording develops a winning equilibrium between the two, and in that stasis a unique and crushing onslaught ensues. Down-tuned hammering and careening feedback abound, as one of the most unerringly *massive* sounding axe-eruptions heard in far too long blares forth, resurrecting fond memories of a host of British and Scandinavian Crust and Metal greats from years past. (LP)-**Ramek**

Hidden Hand "Mother*Teacher*Destroyer" *(Southern Lord, POB 291967, Los Angeles, CA 90029)*. Wino **has** to be the busiest musician on the face of the planet. Not only is he in multiple bands at the same time, when one band breaks up he is already putting together another one. Hidden Hand came about after the demise of Spirit Caravan, and while he was also in Place of Skulls. Hidden Hand put out a 7" and also made two comp appearances in their first year. They released a full-length and another comp their second year, and here we already have the band's second full-length. *Mother...* is a more melodic venture than most in Wino's history. This is more of a straight Rock record with only hints of the Stoner sound in its midst. The album takes as much from Grand Funk as it does from Black Sabbath, and the vocals are more subdued than ever before. Whatever form he decides to take though, Wino and company always find the best of what it is they're going for, and this is no different. While it isn't Saint Vitus or Spirit Caravan, Hidden Hand plays some really rockin' tunes that won't disappoint fans of any of Wino's bands. Dare I say it? This borders on Classic Rock. (CD)-**Myk**

The Hives "aka I-D-I-O-T" / "Barely Legal" *(Epitaph, 2798 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90026)*. There was a time when the Hives really were a Punk Rock band. They didn't just play this sort of watered-down radio friendly post Strokes Brit Pop Punk. These two CDs have just recently been re-released domestically by Burning Heart/Epitaph and display the foundations that made The Hives a household name. *aka....* is only an EP, but *Barely Legal* has 14 tracks and lotsa bite. These were released in 1997 and 1998, and were mostly overlooked by the US market except for a few true Punk Rock outlets. Fans of Iggy will really dig the band's early work, as will fans of early Epitaph bands and Dave Smalley's body of work. Here's your chance to own the work we've been deprived of, and the band's most honest recordings. (CD)-**Myk**

Hopesfall "A Types" *(Trustkill, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724)*. Hopesfall might be the most underrated band in the Emo scene. The songs are crisp and the vocals are dripping with feeling *A Types* is slightly more mellow than their last effort, *Satellite Years*, but it's a more finely-crafted album. The vocals are clear and more powerful. The song structures are more diverse and complicated, and the recording is excellent. To top it off, it has one of the most intriguing and visually interesting booklets you'll see anywhere. This doesn't sound like every whiney ass 90 pound kid in the scene. There's something genuine going on here. (CD)-**Myk**

The Hostage Heart "Where There Is Despair, Hope;" *(Five Point, POB 230026, New York, NY 10023)*. The Hostage Heart is one of the noisiest bands you'll hear anywhere. Structurally, they're very similar to Dillinger Escape Plan, except they feature a lot more pure Grind elements. Extremely precise guitar progressions give this album a Metalcore/ Death Metal feel which is unsurpassed for a brand new band. The twin vocal attack of Death growls and the Daughters' style screeches is pure chaos. At times the band reminds me of Coalesce, and at other times they sound like Heroine or Angel Hair. But with any of these bands, they were all extremely noisy, so you get the picture. Fans of Cream Abdul Babar and Charles Bronson are in for a treat here. (CD)-**Myk**

I Can Make A Mess Like Nobody's Business *(Drive-Thru, POB 55234, Shenman Oaks, CA 91413)*. Another solo CD from a frontman of a Punk-Emo-**that** type of music band. Ace Enders from The Early November has replaced that band's usual sound with the typical solo style. The disc isn't bad by any means—it's played well and the recording sounds great, it's just this has been done soooooo many times in the past couple years—so many bands are going this route that I just can't get over my own prejudices. It would be unfair to directly blame Chris Carraba for this whole explosion, but it certainly is coincidental. Someone needs to change this up and be the front man for a Pop Punk band to release a solo Rap CD. GGG G-Unit. (CD)-**KevTV**

IKilledThePromQueen "When Goodbye Means Forever..." *(Hand of Hope, POB 24913, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307)*. Here is one of those bands I always talk about when I mention that the American market won't embrace a band for no other reason than the fact that they are not Americans. IKilledThePromQueen is from Australia, but they play some of the best New England style Metalcore you'll hear anywhere. They sound like Killswitch Engage, except that they are heavier in the heavy parts. Their melodic prowess is unbelievable. The guitar playing on this album would put them against anyone with a fair shout of praise. Really, if you like bands like As I Lay Dying, Killswitch Engage, Trivium, Darkest Hour or even more pure Metal bands like In Flames, you need to check these guys out, as most people will miss out on 'em. (CD)-**Myk**

Impious "Hellucinate" *(Metal Blade, 2828 Cochran St. #302, Simi Valley, CA 93065)*. Impious is one of those bands that not enough people have heard of. I'm not sure if it's because they're from Sweden or if it's because they've basically been on a different label for every one of their releases. This new album finds them on Metal Blade, and with a very strong offering indeed. It's like a mix between old style Swedish Metal (Entombed) meets Thrash (there are some real Slayer-esque parts on this album). At times there is a bit of the more extreme Swedish, sound similar to a Naglfar or even a little Gothenburg style thrown in, but as a whole this is one raw album and recording. Even the breakdowns have edge to them that's abrasive. Fans of the most extreme Death Metal will find a real treat here, as the band continually shoves it down the listener's throat. (CD)-**Myk**

Instruction "God Doesn't Care" *(Geffen...I can't think of anything clever to say)*. Featuring Tom Capone (Quicksand) and Arty Shepherd (Mind Over Matter, Error Type: 11), I got this disc with high expectations. *God Doesn't Care* at points sounds like Arty writing a Quicksand song (a good thing, as Quicksand is phenomenal; it's also expected given Arty's similar Post-Hardcore slant on music and his collaboration with Mr. Walter Schreifels with the World's Fastest Car project) but it goes beyond comparisons to past musical endeavors. Arty's voice has gotten even stronger and more forceful, as both his singing and screaming display a more mature level of anger and rage. My wallet allows very few musical purchases, and this disc was more than worth it. Songs like "Lean On You" and the single "Breakdown" are forceful and aggressive while stile having hooks that stay in my head for weeks. Rock from New York City lives, and it's not found in some awful new garage hipster band. Viva Instruction. (CD)-**KevTV**

Isis "Panopticon" *(Ipecac, POB 1197, Alameda, CA 94501)*. The last few releases that Isis put out sounded like Neurosis junior. While there are still similarities between the two, this new album has sent the band in a direction of their own. Owing almost as much to grimy Oakland style Punk as to '70's Prog Rock and experimental electronic music, *Panopticon* has the very diverse vibe that one would expect from King Crimson, not so much Bay Area destroyers. Gone, for the most part, are the contrived blasts of Power Violence; in their place are well-orchestrated interludes. The vocals also on have a wider range of power and emotion. This is the band's most accessible recording to date, as they return to creating **real** music after the recently released remix EPs. Isis has delivered an album worthy of their reputation. (CD)-**Myk**

Jed Whitey "Mongoloid Cage Match" *(Manic Ride, POB 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101)*. Jed Whitey finds its way to our shores from Australia. They don't sound like Jet, and they have cover art done by a member of The Hard-Ons. This is total goodness right from the first note. Besides featuring a kick ass version of Devo's "Uncontrollable Urge," Jed Whitey unleash nine original tracks on an unsuspecting US that will hit really close to home for fans of Turbonegro, The Hellacopters, and the most recent crop of Sub Pop bands. Jed Whitey is the kind of band you hope you find on stage at the Continental every night. This is really grooving '70's-inspired Punk Rock that blazes with no pretension, and will even appeal to old Metal fans. Early Priest, Scorpions and Alice Cooper come to mind with the smoking guitar leads that are laid down here. This is a gem well worth investigating. (CD)-**Myk**

Jello Biafra with the Melvins "Never Breathe What You Can't See" (*Alternative Tentacles, POB 419092, San Francisco, CA 94141*). Do you really need me to tell you how great this album is? Of course not, so I'll just confirm what you already know. This is probably the best Underground

Rock album of the decade—I don't care if we're only halfway through it. The Melvins supply a characteristically powerful soundtrack that owes a lot to '80s Metal as Jello rants and raves about thought crime, terrorism, SUVs and whatever else is on his mind at the moment. Jello's lyrics are as incendiary as ever, but this time around he seems a bit more (gasp!) mature. For instance, in "Enchanted Thoughtlist" he ponders his position as a Punk Rock icon, telling those Biafra-ites who may take him too seriously "Don't just question authority / Don't forget to question me" which echoes the "Don't believe it/Don't believe it/Don't believe it/But don't take my word for it" mantra of the Subhumans' Dick Lucas 20 years ago. In an age where Punk Rock seems to be losing its intelligence, Jello Biafra and the Melvins remind that it takes brains to make a great album. Thanks guys. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Jesu *(Hydra Head Industries, POB 291430, Los Angeles, CA 90029).* What sublime pain! We've had Godflesh's *Streetcleaner* in the Dairy Barn CD player for the last month, so I'm fully primed for this. The first full-length from Jesu, the newest project from the prolific Justin Broadrick (Napalm Death, Godflesh, God) is the sound of an angel, weeping. Low-frequency distortion runs below the surface like a dark current, while yod descends lazily, only to be extinguished by icy waters; hypnotic guitars and pipe organ are a cascade of caresses, while Broadrick's echoing vocals waft narcotically in and out of consciousness—you'll be hooked. Those familiar with Broadrick's body of work will recognize this for what it is: some of his best work to date. (CD)-**Black**

Jonny Polonsky "The Power of Sound" *(Loveless, 1122 E. Pike St. #1361, Seattle, WA 98122).* The opening track on *The Power of Sound* resembles the vocal style of Thom Yorke mixed with Power Pop background music. Further into the album, after hearing that "get me on the radio" track, songs become more structured and stylistic, making it more obvious that Jonny Polonsky is unique. The music becomes more intricate and daring, with fancy distortions as the curse-words are cued. Polonsky was discovered by Frank Black in the mid '90s, which is why his quirkiness could help draw parallels with the Pixies. On the other hand, Polonsky sounds as if shadowed by the depressed, moody ghost of Jeff Buckley. This release was mixed by Nick DiDia with guest drums by Josh Freese on tracks four and six. All in all, it's a beautifully mastered first full-length. (CD)-**Cain**

Junius "Forcing Out the Silence" (*Radar, POB 1205, Allston, MA 02134*). Boston must have a helluva music scene these days; most of what I hear coming from there absolutely blows my mind. Junius are certainly no exception. They play dark atmospheric psychedelic Art Rock that would have fit perfectly into the Matador Records catalog 10 years ago. Sonically, they kinda remind me of Bardo Pond, only harder and with male vocals. The songs are well-crafted and highly emotional without being Emo. I look forward to a full-length release. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Kill Radio "Raised On Whipped Cream" *(Sony, 550 Madison, Ave., New York, NY 10022).* Another generic band that the majors are buying up. File this under The Used... you know the band/sound that majors are seeking nowadays. (CD)-**Thee Republicrat**

Killwhitneydead "Never Good Enough For You" *(Tribunal, POB 49322, Greensboro, NC 27449).* Grind. Pure fucking Grindcore. Killwhitmeydead is one of the biggest surprises for me in a long time. I thought for sure I was in for another Emo record with an overly sexy cover. The album is chock full of film samples, including one from *The Crow*, and the music is nothing short of what you'd find on the Howling Bull label or from a band from Oakland. Bands like Nasum come to mind when listening to this, as does Agoraphobic Nosebleed, and even Circle of Dead Children. These guys are brilliant and totally unexpected. Not only do they shred, but they manage to put together some amazing song progressions that are heavy but manage to not get muddy or noisy to the point of being unlistenable. The vocals are brilliant; they are Carcass-inspired, but far from a rip off, and avoid not only the screechy high end, but also the Mortician-like low end, while still having a wide spread midrange. This is a gem. (CD)-**Myk**

Kreator "Enemy of God" *(SPV USA, 48 Broad St, #287, Red Bank, NY 07701).* So many bands that kids listen to today wouldn't exist without Kreator. Almost all the Metalcore bands in existence play essentially a modified version of Swedish Death Metal or Thrash, so when of the biggest Thrash bands in history puts out a new album, you should pay attention. When they kick you ass as they approach 40, you should really take notice. *Enemy of God* has picked up where *Violent Revolution* ended. The band, which still includes two original members, lays down the law. They haven't sold out a bit and despite putting out a couple of bad albums in the '90s, they're still at the top of the Thrash world. The funny thing is, there are a lot of heavier bands out there now, but Kreator doesn't **need** to be heavier; they're just **better**. Kreator have a sound they stick with (and their music is heavy) but they don't need tons of effects and tuning down, and they can still go head to head with anyone. You won't be disappointed. (CD)-**Myk**

Lacrimas Profundere "Ave End" *(Napalm, POB 1983, Port Townsend, WA 98368).* Lacrimas Profundere has found themselves releasing an album that is more mellow than their last couple of efforts. They haven't lost their edge, they just don't have any power or aggressive sonic attacks on the album. The vocals are leaning more and more towards the gothic end of the scale. The guitars have a crisp metallic sound, much like classic Metal, but not the Death Metal sound that bands like this traditionally have. The keyboard parts here are essential to the compositions, the binding blocks; without them, the songs border on a singer/songwriter type of structure. These tracks are very similar to the songs that made Type O Negative a household name, and the mellowest of Paradise Lost tracks from *Draconian Times*. Compelling, moody, and generally dark Lacrimas Profundere. is ramping up to becoming one of the most essential bands in this scene. (CD)-**Myk**

Ladykillers "Welcome to Rock 'N' Roll Kid" *(www.number3records.com).* The Ladykillers sound like they have but one purpose in life: to crank their amps up to 11 and feverishly rock until the sky crumbles from above. This second full-length effort of theirs is a brawny, bulging roar of dirty, stripped-down Rock n' Roll in the tattered tradition of Social Distortion, *Sorry Ma...*-era Replacements, Supersuckers, and The Lazy Cowgirls. Whiskey, cigarettes, guitars, black t-shirts, faded blue jeans, and a rebellious James Dean demeanor strongly saturate the overall feel of every raucously savage song on here. Sure as shit, I bet these snarling Ladykiller boys pass out on a barroom pool table every night after last call and then groggily sup on a breakfast of beans and beer come noontime. Definitely my kinda lifestyle! Rock n' Roll has never been played this gritty and tough, I promise ya! (CD)-**Moser**

Lamb of God "Ashes of the Wake" *(Epic, 550 Madison, Ave., New York, NY 10022).* This may be the heaviest album you ever hear come from Sony; I don't think they really knew what they were getting into when they signed this band. This is possibly the heaviest Lamb of God album you'll ever hear, and it has a much warmer feel than the previous two albums, possibly due to a new producer at the helm. But the band has really found their stride. The first full-length was brilliant; it was new, they were brash and they released an album that was much bigger than anyone could expect. With the second album the band stepped away from their debut a bit with the technical aspects of the songs, and produced a sophomore effort that entirely avoided the slump and actually broke the band into the realm of Metal's heavy hitters. Now, with *Ashes of the Wake*, the band has come into their own. This album that will appeal to Hardcore kids, Metalcore fans, Death Metal fans, and even some more adventurous classic Metal fans—and not **one** of them will cry sell out. This is an all encompassing album that shows the band's talent, their direction, and even their influences. Lamb of God has truly become the new kings of American Metal. (CD)-**Myk**

Last Burning Embers "Lessons In Redemption" *(Pink Frost/Big Takeover, 249 Eldridge St. #14, New York, NY 10002).* I really wanted to like this. With comparisons to bands such as Mission of Burma, Husker Du, Swervedriver and The Wipers, along with the fact that Jack Rabid, weathered New York scenester and publisher of the always informative and enjoyable fanzine *The Big Takeover*, is the drummer, I really thought this was a no-brainer. Alas, *Lessons in Redemption*, the band's debut full-length, leaves a lot to be desired. The band nails the mid '80's Post Punk sound, but the hooks that made Husker Du such a household name are missing, as is a versatile vocalist who can actually hit the right notes, particularly evident on "No Good Deed" and the fingernails on a chalkboard, "Columbus Day." However, Last Burning Embers do a spectacular version of the Wipers' "Nothing Left to Lose." The album is lyrically stellar, which kept me listening longer than I normally would, but it's difficult to get past the vocals, accompanied with a fair share of below-average cuts. (CD)-**McClernon**

Le Tigre "This Island" *(Universal, 1755 Broadway, New York, NY 10019)*. I am very apprehensive to review this record, for one reason. I have an immense amount of respect for all of the females in this group and I do not want to be negative. That said, I'm not even gonna mention what (major) label they jumped to (look above.) This is their third album, even though many people believe it's their first. If you were to compare this album to their body of work thus far, it would be like comparing *Clerks* to *Citizen Kane*. The musicianship has progressed as well as the production, which is what turned me off. Their lyrics are much tamer compared to previous albums. Which again, was one of the things I loved about their first two albums. When I listen to Le Tigre I want to fear that females are gonna takeover the world and jail every last male and make us realize the error in our ways. Instead, it sounds like their going to open up a roller rink and sell cotton candy. They do a cover of the Pointer Sisters "I'm So Excited" which couldn't be more obvious. Mind you, I just talked all of this shit about Le Tigre, but I'll bet you dime that if you were to pull up next to me at a red light I'll probably be playing this album. That is the story of my life. One big fucking anomaly after another. (CD)-**Thee Republicrat**

The Leg Hounds *(Demolition Derby, PB 4005, 2800 Mechelen 4, Belgium)*. Hot damn, The Leg Hounds are beating the utter, complete crap outta my ears with this frantic, high-octane platter of Garage Punk fury! The spastically rockin' Leg Hound trio is being billed as Wisconsin's answer to the Devil Dogs, and, buddy, I do believe it to be all-too-true. These are 11 of the most kick-ass, bone-breakin' Rock n' Roll numbers to ever roar out of the Green Bay area, so do your ears a huge favor and give 'em a good blasting of some Leg Hound-style noise regurgitation. Kick it, boys! (LP)-**Moser**

Les Hell On Heels *(Bomp, POB 7112, Burbank, CA 91510)*. For as long as I can remember, "chick" bands have mostly been considered nothing more than a cutesy-pie novelty item by the mainstream press and a vast portion of the music industry, as well. I vehemently say bullshit to such lame-ass, narrow-minded hypocrisy. Since the 1950s, Rock n' Roll has seen more than its fair share of wildly rockin' ladies who have made an indelible impact on the music world. These womanly musical wonders have included Wanda Jackson, Nico, Patti Smith, The Runaways, Deborah Harry, Siouxsie Sue, The Slits, Joan Jett, L7, Lunachicks, The Donnas, Rotten Apples, and now Les Hell On Heels. This smokin' sweet quartet of lean, mean, and curvaceous hell-kittens slams out 11 sonically blistering tunes that ultimately epitomize the rebellious, snarling spirit of Rock n' Roll loud and perfectly clear. Indeed, Les Hell On Heels possess an obvious primal urge to rock, an unstoppable enthusiasm that's bursting at the seams, contagious as hell, and downright addictive in all the right places. It's been quite some time since I've heard a release that immediately caused my heart to rapidly palpitate, my ass to spastically shake, and my skin to shiver with glee. Les Hell On Heels have done it, and I love 'em dearly for doing so. (CD)-**Moser**

Let It Burn "The Exploding Universe" *(Chunksaah, POB 977, Asbury Park, NJ 07712)*. I can't put my finger on what it is about Jersey bands, but it's gotta be a geographical thing. They all seem to have this similar sound, yet have the capability of sounding rather different from one another. While Let it Burn shares traits with other Joisey natives such as Lifetime, Bouncing Souls, and Sticks & Stones, at the same time they possess something unique of their own, that wouldn't make you think of them as sheer clones of their predecessors. LetIit Burn's sound is drenched in melody, blending late '80's Punk with some of the early '90's Brit Rock without coming off as retro, because they're anything but that; Let It Burn's sound is looking towards the future, and with tracks such as "From Jersey With Love" and "Something to Believe In," the future is looking pretty bright. (CD)-**McClernon**

Liars Academy "Demons" *(Equal Vision, POB 38202, Albany, NY 12203-8202)*. I don't really much care for this album. It's one of those records that I refuse to call bad, but I **will** say I don't care for it. In some ways it reminds me of the Tubes from the late '80s. But it isn't an Emo record, that is for sure. There is a lot of the early Jade Tree sound in it. I also hear a little Jawbreaker in here, and some DC elements. The record is produced by J. Robbins, so you know what he is capable of. Liars Academy has put together a very solid record that I could see being the next big release for Equal Vision. This is K-Rock type music for sure, so be on the look out. (CD)-**Myk**

Lickgoldensky *(Level Plane, POB 7926, Charlottesville, VA 22906)*. This is a band that you can't accuse of slacking off when they write an album. You can't accuse them of rewriting the same album over and over again, either. The only thing you'd be able to tag these guys with is that you can't expect anything from them. This new album is heavy, with tons of bass riffs that drive the songs. The drumming is on another plain. The things that Eric lays down on this album are indescribable, not to mention, at times they are totally independent of the rest of the band. They don't seem to fit at all, but they continue to progress until they meet back up. The vocals range from screams of anguish to weird staccato clean crooning that one would expect to find on a System of A Down album. Actually, fans of System may really like this. Imagine a SOAD song without all the ridiculous vocal parts, and that isn't far from what you might find here. Fans of Pitchblende and some of the early '90's Alternative bands may take interest here, as well as Ron Noiz and people who like bands that he recommends. I think this is right up his alley. (CD)-**Myk**

Lifend "Innerscars" *(Cruz Del Sur, CP 5109, 00153 Roma, Ostiense, Italy)*. This is a very ambitious Gothic Black Metal album indeed. It features female vocals from Sara, and then features both clean and growled male vocals from Alberto and Roberto. They don't sound like Cradle of Filth or Dimmu Borgir—they are more melodic than both of those bands. Lifend doesn't sound like Paradise Lost or Theater of Tragedy, either. They have a lot of the folk elements of a Hagalaz Runedance and they have some of the song structure of To/Die/For, but Lifend is so much better. If anything, their heavy parts sound a lot like Satyricon, and the dual female and male vocals sound like mellow parts from a Lacuna Coil song. Lifend is a fairly diverse band, especially considering this is a debut full-length. Fans of releases on Hammerheart and its sub label will be well-prepared for a band like Lifend, one that will have everyone claiming in 10 years, "I was listening to them back when, blah, blah, blah..." (CD)-**Myk**

Lights Out "Get Out" *(Youngblood, POB 236, Ephrata, PA 17522)*. Like the members of Our Turn, Lights Out hail from San Francisco and play real '80's style Hardcore. The vocalist of this band could be a dead ringer for Ray of Today at times, the songs have gang choruses, finger-pointing breakdowns and even minor feedback in the notes of the solos. The CD features the new release as well as their demo for bonus tracks. With 13 tracks total, this is a Straight Edge essential. I think if bands kept releasing records like this, a lot of the people who left the scene never would have. I can't stop listening to this and it makes the memories very vibrant. I still love real Hardcore and it doesn't get any more real than this. (CD)-**Myk**

Lock and Key *(Deep Elm, POB 36939, Charlotte, NC 28236)*. I'm not sure if I like this band, but they kind of remind me of Hot Water Music. Lots of slow yelling over kind of poppy music. Not my thing. (CD)-**Mr Noiz**

Ludicra "Another Great Love Song" *(Alternative Tentacles, POB 419092, San Francisco, CA 94141-9092)*. Alternative Tentacles now has a Black Metal band on its roster. I can't understand a word on this album, even when I try to read along. Maybe that's why I like it? Ludicra showcase their strong dynamics teamed up with beast-like screaming and speed, which makes for a good recipe. The vocals are hypnotizing and scary thanks to the two females in the group. If you're familiar with some of the members' other bands—Impaled, Hammers of Misfortune and Hickey— then you might want to check this out. (CD)-**Cyst Vicious**

Macabre "Minstrels" *(Seasons of Mist, POB 29364, Philadelphia, PA 19125)*. **CRAP!** Yeah, that's about it. I'm not a Macabre fan, but I appreciate they have a lot of fans and I appreciate that they play a very original form of Metal that just doesn't appeal to me. But I'll be damned if I'll say anything about this fucking turd. An acoustic album about mass murderers, are you kidding? In embryo it is almost comical; in practice it is just stupid. Not even a Macabre fan is going to say, "Oh, let's listen to minstrels instead of any of their other albums." I'm having a hard time getting through it right now—don't bother trying. (CD)-**Myk**

Malady *(Level Plane, POB 7926, Charlottesville, VA 22906)*. Level Plane brings us yet another superb band demonstrating how "Emo" music could and should performed, retaining their credibility and yes, their manhood. Featuring ex-members of Pg. 99 and City of Caterpillar, Malady's debut album is melodic but dissonant, sloppy, but completely focused... all at once. This is what the second album by The Ghost should've sounded like. Comparisons could be made between both bands, but Malady comes across as a harder version of The Ghost, with vocals more akin to those of

Negative Approach's John Brannon. This is an emotionally-intense record that will stir a variety of feelings rendered dormant in you for far too long, though at no time will you feel like a sensitive wuss because the music has such balls. I haven't stopped listening to Malady since I first popped it in to my stereo, which is not so good considering I have a stack of other CDs I'm supposed to be listening to. (CD)-**McClernon**

Man Man (*Ace Fu, POB 552, New York, NY 10009*). Here's an album that'll appeal to the Tom Waits crowd, ie, people who think they're really arty and intelligent because they listen to this pretentious crap. I hate to break it to you, but simply playing with toy instruments does not make you a genius, as this CD proves. Imagine a cross between Modest Mouse and Cake with the clink and clatter of Tom Waits' *Bone Machine*. Yawn. An unknown Russian experimental band called ZGA did a far better album in this vein. Good luck finding it, though. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Mannequin "Warps Yr Head" *(Reptilian, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231)*.. With a brash thundering squall of chaotically trembling noise-addled guitars and fierce tonsil-shredding vocals, Mannequin conjures the stomping, pounding Alt-Rock sounds of the early 1990s when Rock n' Roll was abrasive, cutting, grungy, monstrous, and powerful. Indeed, *Warps Yr Head* is an epic and almighty experiment in sheer sonic fury, seven gut-pummeling blasts of caterwauling distortion, tremor-inducing adrenaline, and deafening megaton rhythms. This EP ultimately brings to mind the most intensely ferocious elements of Nirvana, The Jesus Lizard, Meat Puppets, and Dinosaur Jr. enshrouded in a simmering, scraping gust of amplification. A full-length is supposedly on the way, so prepare your ears for a ruthless assault of meaty flesh-blistering sounds, kiddies. I, for one, can't fuckin' wait! (CD)-**Moser**

Mannequin "Warps Yr Head" (*Reptilian, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231*). Mannequin play a sheer sonic assault, combining *Bleach*-era Nirvana with Karp-style noisy power. The vocals moan and scream and the guitars feedback like crazy while the bass and drums pound you into submission. I like drinking beer to it—you will too! (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Me First and the Gimme Gimmes "Ruin Jonny's Bar Mitzvah" *(Fat Wreck Chords, POB 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119-3690)*. When they aren't gigging with barely-known Punk Rock bands like NOFX or Swingin' Utters, Me First and the Gimme Gimmes play some of the most beloved songs of all time for dozens of fans around the globe. With the recording of this live performance at Jonny Wixen's bar mitzvah in October 2003, the Gimme Gimmes prove why only they (or maybe Killdozer) deserve the title of "best cover band in the world." Blondie's "Heart of Glass"? You got it. "Stairway to Heaven"? The original was too long anyway. Styx's "Come Sail Away," "Strawberry Fields Forever" and "Hava Nagila (Christmas Arrangement)" are just some of the other tracks given the Gimmes treatment.

But lest we forget, Me First and the Gimme Gimmes are savvy showmen that know the value of family and how to connect with their audience. When Spike asks, "Is there anyone old here?" before kicking into "Auld Lang Syne," you KNOW Aunt Esther would've jumped up and pogoed had she not been filling her Depends at the time. And when he poignantly dedicates "O Sole Mio" to the Corleones, it's more than just a dedication; it's tradition.

There are three videos accompanying the music here; you won't get to see anyone plunk one in the punch bowl, but the Wixen family and friends are obviously having a great time, as evidenced by some of the kids in the crowd plugging their ears with their fingers. And the liner notes/photo album by Benjamin Rosenblatt really makes me wish I had sent an RSVP. May I suggest a cover of Sweet's "Fox On the Run" for the next go 'round? (CD)-**Black**

The Methadones "Not Economically Viable" *(Thick, POB 351899, Los Angeles, CA 90035-1899)*. Featuring Dan Schafer of Screeching Weasel / Riverdales, the Methadones' latest album is loosely based on the movie *Falling Down*—a pretty cool concept. *Not Economically Viable* is extremely catchy without being poppy. I wish all the cookie-cutter Pop Punk bands could listen to this and realize that you don't have to be overly whiny and wussy if the hooks are there. This really is exactly the way this music should be done—anyone that thinks Pop Punk has become obsolete needs to give this a spin.. Smart, well done Punk that will definitely hang out in my player for a while. Highly recommended; my awesome find of the issue. (CD)-**KevTV**

The Mother's Anger (*Dionysus, POB 1975, Burbank, CA 91507*). These guys have been hyped a lot lately and now that I've heard the CD, I can safely conclude that it's all hype. They're a duo from Israel—so what? Mike Davis of the MC5 produced the album—again, so what? The songs aren't very strong or very interesting, and the singing is just plain awful...or maybe I just don't get it. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

The Mother's Anger *(Dionysus, POB 1975, Burbank, CA 91507)*. Produced by MC5 bassist Michael Davis, this particular Dionysus release sounds uncannily like a long-lost Nirvana demo that should have sold millions back in the halcyon days of Alt-Rock supremacy circa 1991. In all honesty, though, I can't think of any reason whatsoever why this stunning sonic blast of kinetic fury shouldn't be tearing up the music charts at this very moment. The Mothers Anger is a two-piece band (yes, a mere duo!) who scream, rage, flail, and flitter in a heavily distorted fit of all-out eardrum-puncturing magnificence. It's a heaving, rolling, bone-shattering maelstrom of nonstop frantic rhythms, urgently impassioned vocals, and metallic lava-spewing guitar angst. If more bands would take the same energetic approach to their chosen craft as The Mothers Anger diligently do, then there wouldn't be so much spineless mediocre crap cluttering the airwaves today. This is a relentlessly positive effort by an up-and-coming contender of the highest musical caliber. (CD)-**Moser**

Million Dollar Marxist "Give It A Name" *(Gearhead, POB 421219, San Francisco, CA 94142)*. This is the best band I've heard come out of Gearhead in a while. It is very indicative of the bands the label came to prominence with, but also seems to have shied away from as of late. This is blistering, snotty and alcohol-driven Punk Rock that'll remind you of the Hellacopters, Black Halos, Murder City Devils and the like. The songs are short, but crisp. The vocals border on that feminine quality that pervades the sound of the Black Halos. The drummer is great and the recording is amazing. Even Dirty Donny's cover art is super Rat Fink-styled, and perfectly fits the tone of the album. *Give It A Name* is everything you want in a garage album. (CD)-**Myk**

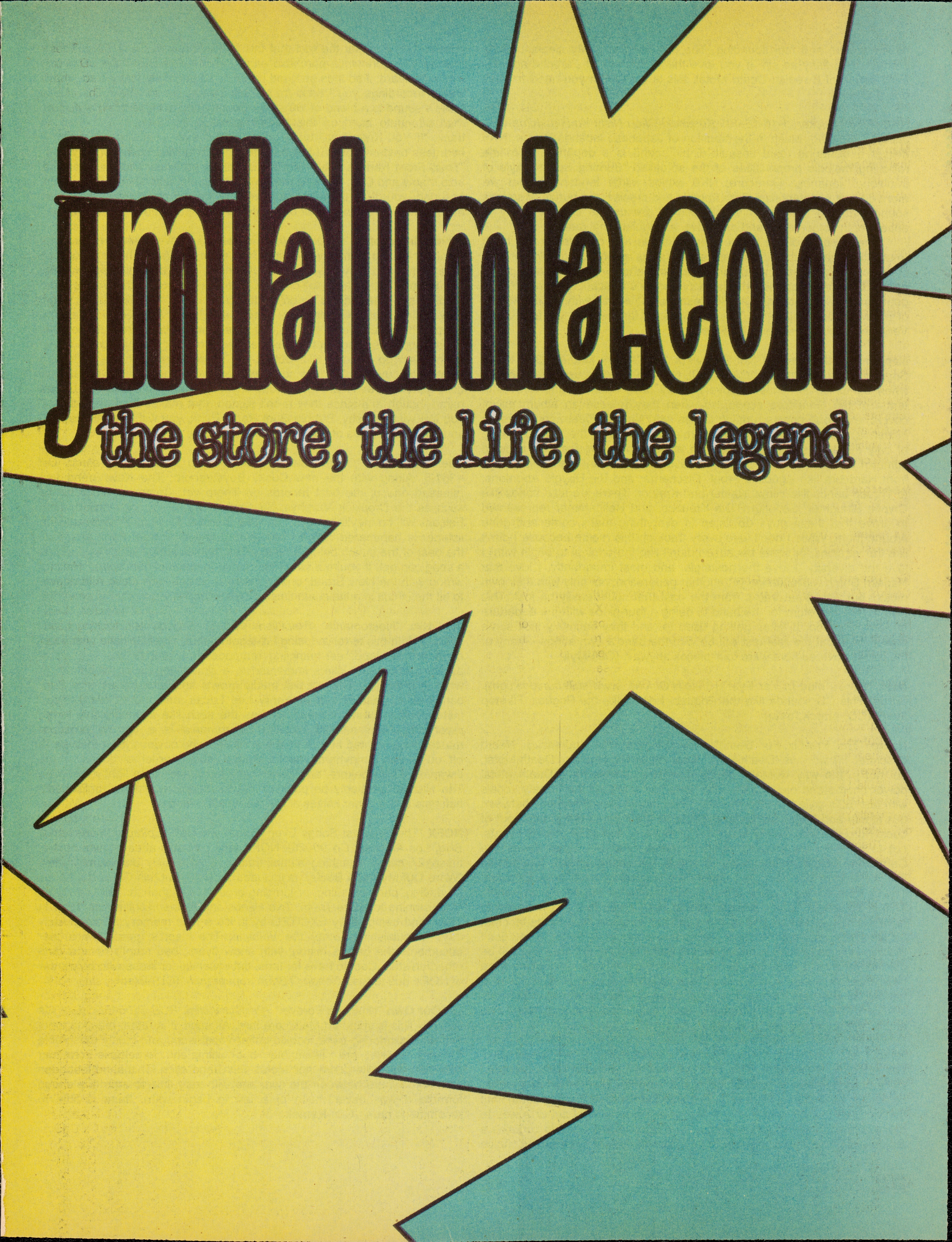
Moktezoom "Impossible" (*Moktezoom, www.moktezoom.com*). Hailing from Los Angeles, California, Moktezoom infuse Psychedelic Alternative Rock with a distinct Latin American flavor to make music that is powerful and passionate. The sultry, seductive vocals of bilingual vocalist Maria Fernanda Karolys soothe over the effects-laden guitar and rocking Latin rhythm section. This is the perfect music for a dinner of Ceviche with your significant other. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Mono "Walking Cloud and Deep Red Sky, Flag Fluttered and the Sun Shined" *(Temporary Residence, POB 11390, Portland, OR 97211)*. Yup, this record is just about everything I hate about music. Incredibly long, drawn-out, instrumental tunes that go nowhere and stir no emotion whatsoever. Just flat-out awful and a complete waste of my time, even if Steve Albini gives it a thumbs up. (CD)-**McClernon**

Mono "Walking Cloud and Deep Red Sky, Flag Fluttered And Sun Shined" *(Temporary Residence Ltd, POB 11390, Portland, OR 97211)*. With a dynamic sound that is similar to the Rachels and Mogwai, Mono's songs are more like compositions, complete with smooth transitions and blistering crescendos. This foursome from Japan has released one of the best instrumental albums I've heard this year. Fans of Explosions In the Sky will LOVE this. (CD)-**Mr Noiz**

Motion Picture Demise "Rebuild/Reform" *(Orange Peel, POB 15207, Fremont, CA 94539)*. I am extremely biased when it comes to Emo music. It's not because I find it to be a whiny, redundant, overexposed genre, but because I simply don't have an ear for 99% of it. Now that I've made that clear, I can say that Motion Picture Demise do not sound as annoying as bands on MTV, but they still do nothing for me. An interesting side note, Mark Morton from Lamb of God lends some guitar work on a song, if that means anything to you; it doesn't to me. (CD)-**Thee Republicrat**

Murder Squad "Ravenous Murderous" *(Candlelight US, POB 707, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462)*. Murder Squad is another release from the Threeman Records/ Candlelight Records collaboration. This band features members of Entombed, Dismember and Autopsy and sounds like early '90s Death Metal. It isn't *Left Hand Path*, but it's as good as you'll find in the modern era. There are no post-Iron Maiden guitar riffs or Metalcore clean vocal breakdowns; this is a cross between Entombed and a Doom band. Much of the album is slow and dirging, while other parts are full



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speed ahead, and foul sounding. The recording is pretty clean, but the production is filthy as sin. If you love the early days of Earache and the early sound of Swedish Death Metal, this is the album you need to seek out. (CD)-**Myk**

NK6 *(Blood Sucker, 1-16-18-403 Kusunoki-Chou Nishi-Ku Hiroshima-City, Japan 733-0002).* Much in the tradition of Japanese legends Gauze, NK6 deliver a blistering tonal assault. Their sound is a departure from the rollicking melodic propensities of the so-called "Burning Spirits" style of traditional Japanese Hardcore; NK6 exhibit wilder tendencies that are more difficult to categorize. Both frenetic and precise, the bursts of savage sound that ring forth on this self-titled 7" are unique in their ability to appear both compressed and explosive, a singular tonal quality.

The strength of the dense. unpredictable fray created by this band (much like that of their forebearers) lies in its ability to completely alter preconceived notions of what can be accomplished within the realm of this genre. The fury captured on this recording is unprecedented in terms of depth and power, attaining a relentlessly creative flair within the confines of a streamlined approach. This record is by far the best yet from NK6. Very highly recommended. (7")-**Ramek**

Napalm Death "Leaders Not Followers 2" *(Century Media, 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250).* Napalm Death is usually on the list when bands do all kinds of covers. They have been around forever in terms of the Grindcore scene, so when they release an album full of covers, everyone comes running to see who Napalm Death considers an influence. This is the band's second release of covers, the first consisting of only five tracks; this one drops in at 19 songs and features nods to some of the best acts the scene has ever had to offer. The songs range from Hardcore like Agnostic Front. Discharge, and the Dayglo Abortions, to Thrash bands like Hirax, Naster and Kreator. There are also bands like Cryptic Slaughter, Sepultura, Die Kreuzen, and Hellhammer represented to prove that these guys **do** listen to everything that's come and gone around them. While I don't love every track on this (some because I don't like the versions, or some because I didn't like the original to begin with) I love the diversity, I love the nostalgia, and most importantly, I love that Napalm Death will influence yet another generation, not only with their own music, but with great tracks from the past that could easily be lost. This also marks the return for the band to being a four-piece with the departure of Jesse Pintado. It takes getting used to, and they definitely lack some power for it, but the real test will be with the band's own songs—many of the bands covered here were four-pieces anyway. (CD)-**Myk**

Neck "Here's Mud In Yer Eye!" (*Shite'N'Onions, www.shitenonions.com*). Shrug. This CD sounds like the Pogues. I don't like the Pogues. I'll stop there. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Necro "The Pre-Fix For Death" *(Psychological, No Address...).* Necro describes his work as "Death-Rap." It combines Hip Hop and Death Metal, but not in the way NuMetal bands do. These tracks have Death Metal power chords and blast beats, and have just replaced the throaty vocals with late '80's style Hip Hop rhymes. The biggest two differences between this album and bands like Limp Bizkit is A) the rhymes are straight out of Lucio Fulci film with their descriptions of murders and other ghastly events, not to mention an amazing ability to name drop old Metal bands like Corrosion of Conformity into songs and B) the album actually has people like Away from Voi Vod, Dan Lilker from Nuclear Assault, and John and Trevor from Obituary, and Jamey from Hatebreed appearing on songs. This is actually a quality straight up Hip Hop album that just happens to have the heaviest beats and rhythms you can imagine. Adding the fact that Ed Repka actually did the cover makes this album even better. If you don't like Hip Hop and you're a devout Death Metal fan, I'm not sure you will be able to get over it from this, but if you like Hip Hop and are looking for a new angle or some quality old school styled stuff, this is it. If you just happen to like music about the most offensive things you can find, this also will fit the bill. But, if nothing else, this is original; you won't find anything like it anywhere. (CD)-**Myk**

Neko Case "The Tigers Have Spoken" *(Anti/Epitaph, 2798 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90026).* This is a live record that Neko Case recorded while playing shows in both Chicago and Toronto. This is kind of a warm-up to her next studio full-length (expected to drop in Spring 2005), but don't be led to think that this is a shameless promotional act or a way to make a few bucks in the meantime. *The Tigers Have Spoken* contains a majority of brand new songs yet to be released as well a number of choice covers. And don't let the fact that this is a live record dissuade you from making this worthwhile purchase either. This is the **BEST** live recording I've ever heard; it sounds **so** good that it rivals in quality many of the latest studio recordings you'll hear from Punk bands. As for the music, Neko Case's sound is a blend of '60's Pop/Country/and Surf, backed by a more than adequate band on this recording called the Sadies. The opening track, "If You Knew," will bring tears to your eyes (if it doesn't, you're a heartless bastard), as will her gut-wrenching rendition of the Shangri-La's "Train From Kansas City." Similar to Neko's previous work in Pop/Punk acts Maow and Cub, her solo work exhibits an almost child-like innocence, assuring you that there is no pretense behind what she's trying to accomplish, refreshing in our consumer-driven society. (CD)-**McClernon**

Never Heard of It "11 Days" *(No Address...).* I give these guys a lot of credit for getting themselves heard. They were on Warp. They are huge on Smartpunk, and they have both a US and a European tour with Bowling For Soup. That takes a lot of work and money, so for that I give them props. As for their music, I don't much care; it isn't that they aren't good, they're fine, but they play the exact same thing that Good Charlotte, Simple Plan, Yellowcard and 25,000 other bands play. I find it to be fairly nondescript. If someone played Never Heard of It for you, you'd like it; you might even go buy the CD. But, if you heard a track on the radio and wanted to buy the CD that song was on, you'd never ever be able to distinguish Never Heard of It from anything else. I **do** love the band's name though and since they aren't signed, that makes it all the better. If you like wishy washy, Bubble Gum Radio Punk, you will love this band. If you hate those kinds of bands, you'll despise this. (CD)-**Myk**

The New Breed "Off the Beaten Path" *(Thorp, POB 6786, Toledo, OH 43612).* Along with the new Ducky Boys record, The New Breed has released one of the best records on Thorp yet. Comparisons to bands such as the Dropkick Murphys, Swingin' Utters, GC5, and early Hudson Falcons will be inevitable, but The New Breed is far from a clone act. The listener is hammered with 13 hard-hitting melodic Street Punk anthems, the best of the bunch being "Friendly Fire," which is just about as good as a song can get. If you're a fan of the above-mentioned bands, you can't go wrong with the New Breed, one of the best Street Punk Rock n 'Roll acts to hit the circuit in quite some time. (CD)-**McClernon**

The Nitz "Necromania" *(Reptilian, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231).* With this terror-inducing full-length debut, The Nitz have embarked on a brutally loud, ear-mangling rampage that sounds like a gang of psychopathic serial killers immersed in a skull-bludgeoning bloodbath of whirling distortion. The vocalist madly growls and screams as if he's the cannibalistic bastard son of Henry Lee Lucas, and the violence-strewn instrumentation thrashes and slashes the flesh like a freshly sharpened razor dipped in rubbing alcohol. *Necromania* is a criminally insane masterpiece created by five ghoulish villains who obviously get their rocks off on murder, mayhem, mental illness, and near-lethal doses of the Dwarves, The Hookers, and Zeke. Take heed and sleep lightly, because The Nitz will probably be peeking in your bedroom window tonight with hatchets and butcher knives at the ready. (CD)-**Moser**

NOFX "The Greatest Songs Ever Written (By Us)" *(Epitaph, 2798 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90026).* NOFX fans probably already own most of these 27 career-spanning album tracks (a previously unreleased track, "Wore Out My Party Boots," is included as well), but this CD is still handy for driving, party-crashing, or jumping around to. Hahahah... all I can think of is listening to *White Trash, Two Heebs and A Bean* six times in a row in 1992, and being really EXCITED by it; it's a nice memory from the early days of publishing *Under the Volcano*. The insert's great, and further documents the band's history with show flyers, bad record reviews and other fun stuff. Cool to have for fans, but essential for those who only know of NOFX due to their *Conan O'Brien* appearance. (CD)-**Black**

On Our Own "Now and Forever" *(Perfect Victim, POB 52064, Boston, MA 02206).* This is standard Metalcore fare. As such, it is rather bland in tone, and its meandering pace, cookie-cutter vocal work, and highly mosh-able E-chord drone are listenable but ultimately forgettable. Neither straightforward Hardcore nor Metal, this band opts for that well-trodden path somewhere between the two, and with very little to add to this tired formula (I was never much of a fan to begin with), there is little to recommend here. (CD)-**Ramek**

One Up "The More Things Change" *(Walk All Night, POB 149, Hunlock Creek, PA 18621).* This six-song EP stands as one of the better Hardcore records I've heard all year. Recorded at the second home for every Hardcore band in the country, Atomic Recordings, every song here is a blazing homage to old-school Hardcore at its finest, with hints of melody and breakdowns in all the right places. The vocalist is the closest thing to Raybeez I've heard since his death. While I might not be into the hard-line Straight Edge point of view here, the music speaks for itself, in volumes over the competition. (CD)**-McClernon**

One True Thing "Finally" *(Play the Assassin, www.playtheassassin.com).* Wow! *Finally* is right! One True Thing vocalist Melanie Wills and guitarist Milan Millevoy were once members of Scarab, a noisy but melodic local favorite. So, what's Melanie been up to since I last saw her outside an all-you-can-eat Chinese buffet in Islip? She's appeared on some From Autumn to Ashes tracks, which I thought was really cool...and playing in this Alt-Rock band, which I'm hearing for the first time. Okay, it's poppy, catchy and kinda mellow (it even has strings!), but not in a bad way; it could fit equally well on WXRK between Slipknot wannabes, or WLIR (are those the call letters these days?) following the day's third spin of "Policy of Truth" by Depeche Mode. And three video tracks are included!

My favorite songs here are the three holdovers from the days of Scarab, "Bloom," "Change" and the slightly slowed version of "Dearest," which stills rips my heart out every time I listen to it. Fuck...I'm crying right now, and the song isn't even playing. I'm serious. Maybe I should look into medication. Eh...it's sucks being empathic. Love me, love me, love me...please. (CD)**-Black**

Operation S (*Broken Rekids, POB 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146*). Here's something different—French keyboard-driven Punk Rock. I'm not one to be put off by other languages, so the fact that everything on this album is in French doesn't bother me one bit. Musically, they're kinda early Blondie/Devo crossed with X-Ray Spex. Overall, their sound is very 1977, but with a modern mentality. Operation S is very definitely worth checking out. (CD)**-chuck.foster**

Our Turn "Catch Your Breath" *(Youngblood, POB 236, Ephrata, PA 17522).* This is band's first full-length and also has their demo as bonus tracks. This CD features 11 of the best Straight Edge songs that may have ever come out of the San Francisco Bay area. This is total Revelation '80's style Youth Crew Hardcore, even going as far as having a block letter logo and a drawing of kids with hoodies on for the cover. Youth of Today, Chain of Strength, Bold and Side By Side all come to mind while listening to Our Turn; imagine any of those bands with great production and you have an idea of what this sounds like. Once again, Youngblood Records produces the best pure Hardcore bands anywhere. These guys really are true 'til death. (CD)**-Myk**

Out of Reach "Never Ending" *(Goodwill, somewhere in Europe?).* This Italian outfit play middling melodic Hardcore. Too often this band succumbs to the Emo/Pop urge, and a fairly forthright scheme is dragged into those doldrums. There are a fair number of decent hooks, and an underlying fast paced energy that shows promise, but the syrupy undercurrent often ruins the experience. (CD)**-Ramek**

Pale Divine "Eternity Revealed" *(Martyr Music Group, POB 1033, McMurray, PA 15317).* Pale Divine some really groove-laden Doom Metal. I almost don't feel comfortable calling it Metal; it's more Hard Rock than anything else. There is a real '70's quality to it, akin to acts like Grand Funk or Sir Lord Baltimore—they played what they wrote, and it was just heavy Rock and Roll. That is Pale Divine. There is too much Rock to be Metal, and it's too melodic to be Stoner Rock. Fans of Electric Wizard and Orange Goblin should check out this band, but don't expect them to be as heavy and dirty sounding as either of those two. (CD)**-Myk**

The Partisans "Idiot Nation" *(Dr. Strange, POB 1058, Alta Loma, CA 91701).* The Partisans are one of those rare breed of bands who actually age for the better. In the early '80s, my skateboard-crazy cousin, Scott, turned me on to an eardrum-rattling plethora of Punk bands via a life-altering array of vinyl that he borrowed from one of his fellow ramp riders. Though the name of it now evades me, one of the albums was a Partisans release, and as soon as I heard it, I was instantaneously hooked. All of these years later, I consider it the ultimate joy in life to be reviewing what I think is the best damn Partisans recording yet. *Idiot Nation* kicks off in raucous, mosh-inspiring mode with the hyper, window-shattering "Reality TV." And there ain't no denying the rampant, blood-boiling fury of the next 10 tracks as The Partisans spew forth a thundering, riot-inciting squall of pure, raging energy. Thanks to the recent no-hope reelection of Howdy Doody Dubya, we need a steady stream of boot-stomping, fist-thrusting audio anarchy like this to keep the complacent, martini-sipping moralists in check. It's quite obvious that those weak, brainless sheep who voted for Bush comprise an "idiot nation" of their very own making, so I implore you all to join the Partisan army and let the anger be heard. (CD)**-Moser**

Pig Destroyer "Terrifyer" *(Relapse, 1720 State Rd., Upper Darby, PA 19082).* What is there to say about this album? It's brilliant. Scott Hull once again delivers the most insane guitar assault you'll hear out of one single human being. The vocals sound like they were recorded through an old '60's microphone giving them that "Sacred Love" sort of sound. The fact that Brian Harvey can keep up with Hull on the drums should have him in consideration for most dynamic drummer. The sheer speed and technicality of some of these progressions is mind numbing. Grindcore, when played by amateurs, is nothing but noise. When it's played by the best of the best, it's the most brutal style of music ever invented. You will find no band more brutal and visceral than Pig Destroyer. You will find nothing as beautiful either. (CD)**-Myk**

Piney Gir "Peakahokahoo" *(Greyday, POB 2086, Portland, OR 97208).* Picture Le Tigre style, only solo over a tiny Casio keyboard. She's the cutest little Brit-Pop girl I've ever seen. Piney Gir , whose name is derived from back when she couldn't pronounce "girl," does this beautiful and inaccurate version of The Who's "My Generation." I think she works best under the flashing lights of a London bar, with intoxicated people enjoying every second of her adorable, fun voice and diverse songs. Excuse my imagination, it runs off sometimes. (CD)**-Cain**

Pointing Finger *(Still Holding On, 65 Au Long Pre 4053 Embourg, Belgium).* Yes, this band is actually called Pointing Finger...and they do indeed take themselves seriously. The good news, however, is that this Euro sXe outfit brings a walloping youth crew rumpus to the fore that ought to get even the most jaded scenester twitching. Those who have long since forgone the trappings of this straight forward formulaic style take heed: there is a characteristic melodic sensibility to this shout-along-driven formula on this record, a predilection for snappy hooks that strengthens the standard build/breakdown fray, and even manages to bring a genuine sense of *fun* to the mix. No, they're not reinventing the wheel, but so what? This record, a collection if the band's previously released 7"s, is upbeat, fast-paced, and memorable. (CD)**-Ramek**

The Poison Arrows "Trailer Park" *(File 13, POB 80468, Chicago, IL 60680).* There is something about songs composed entirely on the computer that makes them hard to pass off as music. Maybe it's a lack of instruments and creativity. Or maybe it's just the Poison Arrows, plural for a one-man band. He does it all, and even bends genres: Electronic, Hip Hop, and Rock. This will put you to sleep after forcing you into a deep depression. (CD)**-Cain**

The Pretty Weapons *(Uprising, POB 490, Laguna Beach, CA 92652).* The Pretty Weapons are the best of the bunch of the latest Uprising releases by far. The band, featuring ex-members of Zao, plays a dreamy combination of the shoe-gazer sound made famous by bands such as Jesus and Mary Chain or My Bloody Valentine mix with a touch of the early '90's Brit Rock sound. Though the overall sound of the band is fairly ethereal and laid back, The Pretty Weapons also know when it's time to rock the fuck out, exhibited throughout their 10 song album. If you're into more modern acts like Skywave or Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, this would fit really nicely into your collection. (CD)**-McClernon**

Rapider Than Horse Power "Rapider Than the World" *(Alone, POB 3019, Oswego, NY 13126).* Rapider Than Horse Power is an energetic Post Rock band pounding out three-chord songs over heavy breathing, annoying but amiable vocals. These tracks are quirky and humorous; I don't know whether to have a panic attack or enjoy this. Some cuts make me want to dance like those girls in the iPod commercials, and some make me want to pull my teeth out. I guess that's a good thing. (CD)**-Cain**

Red Eyed Legends "Mutual Insignificance" *(File 13, POB 80468, Chicago, IL 60680).* This five-song EP is just enough for you to get the feel of Red Eyed Legends Retro-Punk or New Wave sound; there are catchy power chords over simple beats and that same keyboard sound you'd hear on a

Murder City Devil's CD. Although this sounds completely clichéd, Red Eyed Legends are pretty much favorite band-worthy. Vocals are similar to Tim Armstrong in that "I just smoked a carton of cigarettes" fashion, while still being echoed and unique. It's like listening to Jet or the Hives, minus the status, plus the cool. Play it at your next dance party. (CD)-**Cain**

Red Harvest "Internal Punishment Program" *(Nocturnal Art/Candlelight US, POB 707, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462).* If Fear Factory never lost their nerve, they could only hope to be this heavy. Power Electronics meet a whole new realm of extreme Metal; full-sounding guitar riffs are merged with sonics of all forms and then layered with tons of highly-structured drum sequences. If you've heard the Fear Factory's *Concrete*, you might get a similar feel from those under-mixed cuts and early versions. Tons of bass-heavy riffs tear through these tracks, giving them a tremendous bottom end. These songs are heavy, not necessarily fast, but heavy. There is a deep atmosphere to the songs, and the vocals often remind me of early Sepultura. Red Harvest is one of the best bands on the Nocturnal Art label, and we're lucky to be able to get our hands on 'em. (CD)-**Myk**

The Redliners "Either Way We're Screwed" *(www.spatrecords.com).* The Redliners are two dudes who dress like the Blues Brothers and create a heavily distorted Garage Rock cacophony like The Kinks and the Sonics battling with Mudhoney for ultimate control of our audio universe. With just a bare-bones rhythm section of one guitar and a drum kit, this Nashville-based duo beats all hell out of their instruments and sends the listener's ears reeling in an electrifying fit of nonstop noise. My favorite cut of the 10 is the blistering, ballsy "So Negative," which frantically careens throughout the stereo speakers like a barrage of steel-tipped bullets ricocheting off a slab of solidified concrete. "Technokill," "Pest," and "Just Tonight" are three other choice ravers that rattle the skull absolutely senseless, as well. All in all, The Redliners rock with a vehemence and fury that could only be born out of primal madness and animalistic urges. Step right up, and prepare to get mercilessly battered. (CD)-**Moser**

Renee Heartfelt "Magdalene" *(Limekiln, POB 4064, Philadelphia, PA 19118).* This is what Post-Punk is supposed to sound like. It still rocks, but emotionally the band conveys the feelings they are going for. It isn't whiny, the vocalist **doesn't** sound like a crying 10 year old, and the guitars don't sound like they were copped off an Air Supply record. This band is similar to Quicksand with a clear but heartfelt vocalist. The guitar sound still features a little distortion, and there are some bass breakdowns similar to the old Shift sound. The band features ex-members of Count Me Out, Striking Distance, and Give Up the Ghost, so you really **are** talking Post-Hardcore in this case. For all you people who miss Quicksand, Orange 9mm, Stillsuit, Shift and other such bands, Renee Heartfelt might be for you. You should especially checkout the opening track, "Mary Magdalene," which is extremely haunting. (CD)-**Myk**

Ricanstruction "Love + Revolution"*(Uprising, POB 490, Laguna Beach, CA 92652).* I can't say that this did too much for me. These Puerto Rican natives to New York have been playing around for quite some time and sad to say, I'm still not much into them. They play politically-charged Punk/Hardcore with a heavy Hip Hop influence, as well as a little Reggae, ala Bad Brains, but I still can't get myself into it. Musically, Ricanstruction is really tight, it's just nothing special. However, they **do** get major points for guest appearances here by Chuck D. of Public Enemy and Vernon Reid of Living Colour. Now only if they did a cover of "Cult of Personality..." (CD)-**McClernon**

Riistetyt "Orjat Ja Kurjat" *(Fight, Hikivuorenkatu 17 D 36 33710 Tampere, Finland).* One of their first records in years. The results of this effort yield few surprises, and should please both long-time fans of this Finnish powerhouse, and those with even a peripheral interest in international Hardcore Punk. This is unadulterated fast-paced spikes n' studs pummel with vitriolic drive. Stripped down structuring, jackhammer percussion, and effective (*surly*) vocal work evokes an incendiary power. Riisteteyt—along with a few other like-minded Finnish outfits from the early 1980s such as Kaaos, Rattus and Terveet Kadet—were innovators of a deceptively simple, blazing approach that has influenced countless others since. This addition to an impressive back catalog marks no noticeable deviation from what has gone before. Riistetyt took a bit of a Goth Rock downturn some years ago, but since their reformation have been ripping like the good old days. Simple and vital, this is an excellent record. (10")-**Ramek**

Roses Are Red "Conversations" *(Trustkill, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724).* Had this been 10 years ago, this is the kind of band I would have expected to find on Crisis Records along side Farside. This is classic Metal-influenced Radio Rock; imagine Thursday or Thrice without the screaming and power chords. *Conversations* is too heavy to be straight Emo. It isn't Iron Maiden classic Metal, the vocals are too contemporary, but the guitar riffs are an indictment of whom the band listened to growing up. This is what Sum 41 and American Hi/Fi would sound like if they tuned down a bit, and an excellent example of what the term "Post-Hardcore" really means; there are the heavy elements of Hardcore, but also the song progression and sensibility of a Quicksand. Avenge Sevenfold fans should take notice; Roses Are Red aren't as heavy, but many of their songs have the same sort of feel. (CD)-**Myk**

Roses Are Red "Conversations" *(Trustkill, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724).* I just had a conversation with someone about five minutes ago. Content included Trustkill bands and how stereotypical they are. This include band names, image, photography and the blatant portrayal and simultaneous denial of sexism. Above all, the biggest cliché of all—sound! Then this CD was put in my Discman, which only reinforced some of the ideas in that conversation. Well, Trustkill fans, I know you're neither few nor far between—you'll love it! Music snobs—you'll hate it! That is, if you even give it a chance to grace your ears. I don't even have to describe it to you, I just have to say "Trustkill." See? You already know what I'm talking about. (CD)-**Cain**

Rosetta West "X Descendant" *(Alive, POB 7112, Burbank, CA 91510). X Descendant* is a nine-song witch's brew of distilled booze, swamp sweat, Mississippi mud, bayou Blues, and barroom Psychedelia. I'll just call it "blooze," and let Rosetta West speak for themselves in all of their gritty, voodoo-laced splendor. Influences seem to range from John Lee Hooker and Creedence Clearwater Revival to early ZZ Top and even The Black Keys. The sound is stark, rural, and abundantly mannish, yet with a purgatorial, melancholy feel to it. *X Descendant* should be played as midnight fades into the shadows and the full moon rises low. Bring your own jug, and beware the hound dogs howlin' in the distance. (CD)-**Moser**

Rotting Christ "Sanctus Diavolos" *(Century Media, 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250).* Rotting Christ was one of the first Black Metal bands I ever heard; between them and Opeth, I was hooked. One of the reasons that these bands appealed to me was their ability to expand in a style that was long thought of to have very narrow boundaries without ever straying from the style. The use of keyboards, different vocal tones, song structure change ups and musical styles all added up to intellectually appealing albums delivered with sheer brutality. With *Sanctus Diavolos*, Rotting Christ returns to the non-compromising style of invention. These songs are crafted (and structured) with all kinds of elements, much like Borknagar or Arcturus. Greece's Gods of Metal once again take their throne as no others could. It's one thing to **say** you're the best; it's another to get down and dirty and show why you are, and leave everyone else in the dust in the meantime. No one can keep up with Rotting Christ, and their inventive song writing. (CD)-**Myk**

SOS *(Perfect Victim, POB 52064, Boston, MA 02206).* SOS play melodic Hardcore Punk with a not-so-subtle Rock n' Roll influence (surprise, surprise). Their midtempo numbers recall a cross-section of old and new, with more than a nod to the plus-minus trouncing of the Suicide File complimented by hints of R'N'R-esque axe-slinging. Not bad, but there are a fair amount of bands incorporating this cross-section of styles into their sound, and SOS aren't particularly standout. While upbeat riffs and sturdy rhythms drive these 13 minutes of music along at a brisk enough pace, the vocals are particularly weak and subdued, detracting considerably from a comparatively muscular hook-laden fray. Still, this six song EP may be worth a listen for fans of the above-mentioned outfits. (CD)-**Ramek**

Sage Francis "Healthy Distrust" *(Epitaph, 2798 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90026).* So it's come to this huh? Epitaph is now releasing Hip Hop albums. What's next, a 2 Live Crew retrospective? I'm kidding of course, and though this ain't exactly my area of expertise, I found myself digging this album a lot more than I expected. I've been reading a lot about Sage Francis lately, and from what I've gathered this guy is like the MC it's alright to like and sing the praises of if you're a punk. I won't go **that** far, but his beats are pretty catchy, and as far as Hip Hop goes, I'd wager that this album is more creative and more experimental than most in the genre, if for no other reason that Francis incorporates real instruments. As for his delivery, it's simultaneously smooth and abrasive, and when accompanied with thought-provoking socio-political lyrics, he really is second to none. While I might not be spinning *Healthy Distrust* often, Sage Francis is the goods and should be taken seriously in circles that extend beyond our little scene. (CD)-**McClernon**

Seneca "Existe" (*Radar, POB 1205, Allston, MA 02134*). Interesting. Seneca sound almost exactly like the Music, only more Prog oriented a la King Crimson. If yer into that kind of spaced-out fuzz-drenched Psychedelic Rock (like I am) y'oughtta check this one out. It's probably great through headphones. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

The Shakedowns (*VMS/Morphius, 100 E 23rd St., Baltimore, MD 21218*). I guess DC ain't a bunch of whiny Emo kinds after all. The Shakedowns play real Rock n' Roll, the kind that would kick everyone's ass at CBGBs. They've got that twin guitar MC5/Radio Birdman/Murder City Devils vibe going on with a stiff cock firmly in place. They also remind me of Bellingham, Washington's USS Horsewhip. Jack Endino, who produced most of the early Sub Pop catalog, ran the board on this one. Get drunk, dance, take a girl home, Rock n' Roll! (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Simply Waiting "The Subtle Dynamics Between the Windshield and the Rearview" (*A Small Voice Screams World, POB 38, Vandalia, OH 45377).* Emo tends to make me cry, but not for the same reasons that the Emo kids are crying. And what's with the ultra-pretentious album/song titles? Get over yourselves! (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Since By Man "Love/Hate" *(Revelation, POB 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232).* This EP is four songs of a dirty, sometimes noisy, sometimes straight forward fusion of Hardcore Punk and Metal. I can't really put my finger on it, but Since By Man has a nostalgic feel, yet with a totally modern sound. (CD)-**Mr Noiz**

The Slow Signal Fade "Through the Opaque Air" *(Stroll, 1851 N. Gramercy Pl., Los Angeles, CA 90028)*. The Slow Signal Fade are like a hushed breath of cool, misty sweetness upon the ears. Vocalist Marguerite Olivelle possesses a voice that literally defines the feminine mystique as an exotic, angelic, and sensuous entity. Guitarist Ron Ulicny, bassist Chris Walters, and drummer Christy Greenwood enshroud themselves in a magically divine smorgasbord of hypnotic, ethereal tones that's remindful of The Cure, Siouxsie and the Banshees, and Swervedriver. It's the sound of fallen cherubs in a field of snow, wailing for deliverance from evil and salvation in the clouds. I've never in my life heard such glorious incantations of brightly fluttering musical beauty. Damn, I do believe I'm gonna cry now. (CD)-**Moser**

The Spits "19 Million AC" *(Dirtnap, POB 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)*. Even though *19 Million AC* is being billed as an EP, there are actually 18 tracks on here. My theory is the EP status is warranted due to the unabashed brevity of each song (clocking in at less than two minutes apiece on average). I don't know much about The Spits, but I can now attest to the fact that they create a fun, goofy, and jubilantly upbeat racket. It has a definite early '80s vibe that raucously mixes New Wave and Old School Punk into a gelatinous cauldron of electronic alien skateboard noise. In fact, I wouldn't be a bit surprised if The Spits consider the Ramones, The Stranglers, The Weirdos, Devo, and Flipper major flashes of inspiration, because each of the aforementioned bands assuredly fit into the sonic schematics at hand. A rapid succession of buzzsaw guitar riffs and furiously rumbling bass and drum rhythms meet their match in the form of taunting, robotic vocals and fluorescent Martian synthesizer expulsions. The Spits have put the spazz and pizzazz back in Punk with plenty of pogo-inducing gusto. I dare you to let them play your party. (CD)-**Moser**

Six Feet Under "Graveyard Classics 2" *(Metal Blade, 2828 Cochran St #302, Simi Valley, CA 93065).* I understand the relevance of the *Graveyard Classics* album, but also thought that Chris Barnes' vocals really made it hard to fully enjoy. They did a lot of underground classics on that album, so some people may not have even realized what the originals sounded like. Well, that won't be a problem this time around;. they've covered AC/DC's *Back In Black* in its entirety. I feel the same way after hearing the first the first volume; I appreciate the band's dedication to their roots, but Chris' vocals kill it. The music on this, although a little slow, sounds good. They could have pulled this off, but no die hard AC/DC fan is going to like it. Even people like me, that like Death Metal, will have a hard time with this because the songs just aren't right. It just isn't working for me, and I think there are few out there that it will work for. Maybe a few diehard SFU fans will get into it, but even for them I think these songs will be too simple and mellow. Oh well, the sentiment was in the right place. (CD)-**Myk**

Skating Club "The Unfound Sound" (*Kimchee, www.kimcheerecords.com*). Aubrey Anderson, aka Skating Club, offers us singer/songwriter dribble that's sure to wind up on radio stations that play Cher, Elton John, Michael Bolton and Maroon 5. Recommended for hipster chicks who want to grow up to be middle-aged receptionists. (CD)-**chuck.foster**

Social Distortion "Sex, Love and Rock n' Roll" *(Time Bomb).* It's only been a mere eight years since Social D's last release, so one might wonder what the boys have been up to in that time. And the answer to that question comes in the form of *Sex, Love, and Rock n' Roll*, 10 of the greatest Rock tunes you'll EVER come across. The naysayers and pessimists might gripe that after all this time, there are only10 tracks here, but I would counter that the band fine-tuned each element—every note, chord, and lyric—so precisely most songs are absolutely perfect...and the record sounds huge, to boot. So how does this compare with their self-titled classic or the fan favorite, *Mommy's Little Monster*? It's as good as either, and possibly, in some ways, better; the songs are a little more soulful, and while some are slowed down just a tad, that doesn't take away from the fact that they are more earnest and heartfelt than anything else out there. (CD)-**McClernon**

Stage Bottles "We Need A New Flag" *(Insurgence, 2 Bloor St.W. Suite 100-184 Toronto, ON, M4W 3E2 Canada).* Skinheads with horns! This shit is catchier than crabs. Songs like "Millions of Stupid People," "Real Skinhead," "Kick Out the Parasites" sound like the anthems for their live show. Stage Bottles are able to spare the typical tough guy act and write good songs that sound tough (did that make sense?) Quality music here, especially for you kids who just shaved your Mohawk. (CD)-**Cyst Vicious**

Steve Turner "Steve Turner and His Bad Ideas" *(Roslyn Recordings, 4509 Interlake Ave. N #201, Seattle, WA 98103).* Ahhh, another Steve Turner album just in time for another dark, depressing winter! For those of you who perpetually cry that there isn't any good music being made anymore, you couldn't be more wrong. Steve Turner is possibly the greatest untapped resource in music today! Songs like "Move Ahead," "I-5 Corridor," "Greenback Dollar," and "A Beautiful Winter"—his opus to date—prove that he's a bonafide singer/songwriter. His themes about dysfunctional relationships, solely due to the protagonists neurosis, makes me feel right at home. Steve taps into his garage influences on "Zero On The Scale" and "I Love The Sound Of My Guitar when It Sings," two songs that you will humming all the to the unemployment line. Guest musicians include Bruce Brand (Thee Headcoats,) Dan Peters (Mudhoney,) Stone Gossard (Green River,) Holly Golightly (Thee Headcoatees, professional cameo artist) and others. (CD)-**Cyst Vicious**

Stiv Bators "Disconnected" *(Bomp, POB 7112, Burbank, CA 91510).* As the 25th anniversary of the release of *Disconnected* approaches, the fine folks at Bomp Records have reissued Stiv Bators' classic solo album. It's been grandly repackaged with five previously unheard bonus tracks and a CD booklet bulging with lots of spectacular photos and an abundance of informative liner notes. Though not as musically decadent and nihilistic as the Dead Boys' material, Stiv Bators' solo offering is an inspiring rush of Rock n' Roll madness at its most gripping and seductive. With muscular Power Pop overtones and a jittery, bruising influx of Garage Rock brashness, the songs brilliantly run together in an amazing display of sheer electrical fervor. *Disconnected* was originally released 10 years before Stiv Bators exited this crazed wrecking ball of humanity, and it's a lasting testament to the unmistakable power and overt raw vibrancy that both Stiv's voice and his ragged, raging persona possessed. Long live the Stiv! (CD)-**Moser**

Strangers By Day "The Death of Apathy" *(Uprising, POB 490, Laguna Beach, CA 92652).* Strangers By Day conveniently fall into the same category as bands such as Thrice or Poison the Well. You know the type—melodically driven Punk with a heavy, guitar-driven Metal influence, coupled with one singer who sings and another who screams like an annoying banshee. This wouldn't be so bad if the Metal parts were dropped or if this style hadn't been done far too many times before. If you ask me, apathy is alive and well on this here record. (CD)-**McClernon**

Submission Hold "What Holds Back the Elephant" *(G7 Welcoming Committee, POB 27006, 360 Main Street Concourse, Winnipeg, MB, R36 4T3, Canada).* I love this kind of Punk, where well-written songs exude effort and artistic ability; there's intelligence while still encouraging you to punch a hole in the wall. Submission Hold features strong female vox and songs about environmentalism, feminism, and politics. What's not to love? Notable track, "Seated June 16, 1994," only featured on the CD version of this release, is a completely improvised song which blends so perfectly—lyrically and musically—it makes me wanna cry. Thank god for Canada! (CD)**-Cain**

Suicide Note "Too Sick to Dance" *(Ferret, 167 Wayne St. # 409, Jersey City, NJ 07302).* This is about as experimental a Hardcore record as you'll ever find. Two of the members of Suicide Note are Jazz musicians; one is working on a graduate degree in the subject. Early Hydra Head or Escape Artist bands come to mind when listening to this. There are little bits of Emo in here, parts that could appear on an Isis album, parts that would make Man Is the Bastard blush and even a few minutes that should be called Tribes of Neurot. This album is nothing if it isn't diverse—what you do need is patience. Some of the songs take a long time to develop, and some are so slow that they can really irritate an unprepared listener. If you're looking for the Metalcore/ Hardcore bands that Ferret is known for releasing, this sure as hell isn't it. This is for fans of Fantomas, Melvins, Isis, Neurosis and even some San Diego bands like Three Mile Pilot and Crash Worship. (CD)**-Myk**

Sweet Poison "Yesterday's Sweethearts" *(Street Anthem, 6201 15th Ave. NW #8306, Seattle, WA 98107).* I'm not familiar with too many bands from Belgium. I'm sure they exist, I've just not heard too many. This is great old sounding Punk Rock. It brings to mind Social Distortion (the pissed off 14 year old Mike Ness days), Youth Brigade, a bit of the Avengers, and they even do a Misfits cover here. The interesting spin on this band's approach is the female vocals. Kim not only plays guitars, but includes some really high quality vocal parts that will help separate Sweet Poison from the similar acts. This is the band's second release, and a really nice surprise for me. Give these guys a chance if you have the opportunity. (CD)**-Myk**

Tamora "There's No Tomorrow Baby, So How About Tonight?" *(Happy Couples Never Last, POB 36997, Indianapolis, IN 46236-0997)* Pissed off and focused Hardcore, Tamora's focused songs are matched by their poignant lyrics and song titles. Anti-Christianity, anti-homophobic, pro-woman, pro-vegan....if Propagandhi went Hardcore, Tamora is a good guesstimate of what the result would sound like. A six song EP that offers just enough vegan food for thought. Well done, smart Hardcore. Check out www.tamorakills.com. (CD)**-KevTV**

Tarentel "We Move Through Weather" *(Temporary Residence Ltd, POB 11390, Portland, OR 97211).* With eight tracks consisting mainly of noise and drums, Tarentel have a very obscure sound, which as their bio says, is very difficult to describe. I guess it's safe to say the sound falls somewhere between Heavy Metal and New Age. (CD)**-Mr Noiz**

Taxi "Who's to Blame?" *(Dead Beat, POB 283, Los Angeles, CA 90078).* I think I saw Italy's Taxi open for The Kids earlier this year down in Brooklyn and to be honest, I wasn't all that impressed; this two-song 7" doesn't do much to sway my opinion, either. While I like the style (late '70's, LA-influenced Punk n' Roll), these two tracks don't leave me wanting more, they just leave me wondering what the point of releasing a two-song record is. For the love of God, do us all a favor and slap two more songs on this bad boy. (7")**-McClernon**

Ted Leo and the Pharmacists "Shake the Sheets" *(Lookout! POB 11374, Berkeley, CA 94701-1374). Hearts of Oak* was one of my fave releases of 2002, and *Shake the Sheets* succeeds in being one of my faves for 2004. Whereas *Hearts...* was a fun, flirtatious homage to many of Leo's favorite bands of the late '70s and early '80s (The Attractions and Thin Lizzy come to mind) injected with personal politics, *Shake the Sheets* comes across as more tense, serious, and harder to put a finger on stylistically. The prominent keyboards from *Hearts...* are gone, making this more of a straight "Rock" album, but songs like "Little Dawn" and "The Angel's Share" are right up there with "Where Have All the Rude Boys Gone?" *Shake the Sheets* meshes politics and humanist ideologies with excellent songwriting and hooks that won't quit; it takes my breath away. (CD)**-Black**

Texas Thieves "Killer On Craigs List" *(Dr. Strange, POB 1058, Alta Loma, CA 91701).* When I hear urgently infectious Old School Punk like this, I just wanna do two things: drink beer and spastically pogo around the room like a stark, raving lunatic. I'm currently experiencing an extreme brain-fart moment, though, because the Texas Thieves sound distinctly familiar, but I just can't place who it is that they sonically resemble (maybe the Adolescents, Agent Orange, Kraut, Pennywise, and The Offspring all combined, perhaps?). I **do** know that *Killer On Craigs List* is a frenetically stunning release replete with snarling, phlegm-spitting vocals and vibrantly explosive instrumentation furiously careening out of the stereo speakers like an atomic-powered locomotive. Punk as fuck and twice as fun! Now if you'll please pardon my abrupt departure, I'm gonna guzzle several cold brews and pogo myself straight through the roof. (CD)**-Moser**

These Enzymes "Henry" *(Doghouse, POB 8946, Toledo, OH 43623).* What happens when you mix members of the All American Rejects with members of the Sons of Abraham? Something less appealing to the teen scene. Something more aggressive and raw. Something like These Enzymes. It's good to not hear songs about girls; I like songs about religion, politics and such. The blatant Hardcore score, track four (titled "Song Five), is introduced and broken in half by a sweet and quiet piano solo. There are only five songs on this EP, but it's a great foreshadowing of what's to come. (CD)**-Cain**

Think I Care "Mongrel" *(Walk All Night, POB 149, Hunlock Creek, PA 18621).* Another Hardcore album recorded at, you guessed it, Atomic. One of my main beefs with Hardcore in its present form is the fact that so many of the bands are simply weaker incarnations of those that came before them, from the music straight down to the recordings themselves. Luckily for Think I Care, they avoid falling into that category. While not exactly original, Think I Care plays with enough spirit to overcome that aspect, keeping the listener interested throughout the short duration of the disc. As far as the current Hardcore scene goes, I'm sure that Think I Care will be a welcome addition to any town's club or VFW hall. (CD)**-McClernon**

Toilet Boys "The Early Years" *(Ozit Morpheus, POB 67082, Century City Station, Los Angeles, CA 90067).* Ahh The Toilet Boys, one of New York's best-kept secrets, from their beginning days as LES celebrities until they eventually called it quits. This 17 track disc compiles the very best of the Toilet Boys early material, including their superb 10". Their sound could be compared to many of the early Punk bands that called CBGBs or Max's home in the late 1970s, such as the Ramones and particularly Johnny Thunders and the Heartbreakers, both in sound and makeup. If you ever had the opportunity to see the Toilet Boys, then you know what a spectacle they could be, but you would also have realized that beneath all of Miss Guy's hair was a band with great tunes and even better stage presence. This CD culls some of their best output, such as "Scaredy Cat," "Good Girl," as well as terrific renditions of Motorhead's "Vibrator" and Poison's "Talk Dirty to Me." Pick this CD up to learn what all of us New Yorkers were already privy to. (CD)**-McClernon**

Travoltas "All We Really Want Is Rock N' Roll" " *(FastMusic, POB 206512, New Haven, CT 06520).* Please refer to Travoltas High School Reunion review. (CD)**-Thee Republicrat**

Travoltas "High School Reunion" *(FastMusic, POB 206512, New Haven, CT 06520).* What could be dumber than the band name, you ask? The music. If you're a fan of Nerfherder and their cute whimsical songwriting, you'll eat this right up. I personally find this irritating. It sounds like Travoltas are just dying to be on MTV and make a cute video. The songs are catchy, but so is MC Hammer. (CD)**-Thee Republicrat**

Until the End "The Blind Leading the Lost" *(Eulogy, POB 24913, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307).* Listening to Until the End reminds me of the first time I listened to Integrity; they're just so much heavier than those around them, and their songs are set up for nothing other than having audience members absolutely annihilate each other. Even with a new vocalist, this is one of the most punishing Straight Edge bands you'll ever hear. I listen to these guys and wonder how Hatebreed and Sworn Enemy are huge and these guys aren't. Until the End is heavier, has more hooks, and a better and crisper guitar sound. The CD features 10 tracks without a second of filler. This is a band for the kick boxer in us all, and featuring members of Against All Authority, Where Fear and Weapons Meet, and Morning Again doesn't hurt either. This is a must own for fans of the current Hardcore and Metalcore scene. (CD)**-Myk**

V/A "A Santa Cause" *(Immortal, 12200 Olympic Blvd, Suite 400, Los Angeles, CA 90064).* This album is a benefit for Pediatric AIDS, which is a fantastic cause. The CD is packed with 20 covers and a *Who's Who* of current Punk bands, including Something Corporate, Blink 182, Matchbook

Romance, New Found Glory, Beautiful Mistake, and a cover of Run DMC's "Christmas In Hollis" by the AKA's. For fans of the current Pop Punk and Emo scene, this is a fantastic release. There are a lot of exclusive tracks, and the money goes to a good cause. Your parents may not even hate you playing it at Christmas time, especially with Acceptance doing "So This Is Christmas." 'Tis the season. (CD)**-Myk**

V/A "Brand New Rage: A Tribute to UK Subs" *(DSS, POB 739, A-4021 Linz, Austria)*. Well, it's about fucking time! A bone-crushing tribute to a legendary band worthy of such a sonically incendiary homage. The mainstream music press with its second-rate, college-educated "journalists" is always heaping hip praises upon the holy trinity of Punk (the Ramones, Sex Pistols, and The Clash) without ever once mentioning the powerful and almighty UK Subs. The irony of it all is the Subs raucously erupted out of the same era as the aforementioned gods of Punk; their songs were (and still are!) as catchy and influential as anything released by those other three bands; and most importantly, they've managed to survive the past 25 years or so without losing one ounce of energy and unbridled passion for what they love and hold so dear (their music). Indeed, the Subs still routinely record new releases while touring regularly and extensively, and that within itself speaks volumes about the fine art of perseverance. I'm assuredly not randomly espousing any sort of blasphemous Punk Rock sacrilege here, folks. I love, admire, and appreciate the Ramones, Sex Pistols, and The Clash immensely, but the UK Subs have been continually denied their rightful, well-earned place in the scholarly world of rambling historical Punk dissertations. Sermon complete, I now heartily recommend you make every conceivable effort to acquire this brilliantly packaged collection of UK Sub standards reverently (but rambunctiously) recorded by some of today's most savage and dastardly Street Punk combos (including Squad 21, Billyclub, Self Destruckt, Red Alert, Pointy Boss, Sonic Barrels, Jakkpot, The Red Eyes, and more). There's 27 turbulent and inspiring tracks altogether, and not one stinker in the entire batch. Now get your asses out there and "Riot"! It'll do the Subs proud. (CD)**-Moser**

V/A "Off Target" *(Coalition, Newtonstraat 212, 2562 KW Den Haag, The Netherlands)*. This sampler marks the 10 year anniversary of Coalition Records. It features all of your favorites like Das Oath, Seein' Red, Tear It Up, and the Je Ne Sais Quoi. I like that the tracks are strategically placed on this compilation to draw you in, introducing the eclectic, friendly-sounding bands in the beginning such as Fever Dream and Oil, followed by the more abrasive bands like Das Oath and The Rites. The CD is ended by four upcoming tracks by Crimson Curse, the Kill Pill, Entropia, and Betercore. Two bonus tracks by Suicide Party and Pandemonium. That equals 75 minutes of Coalition, past and present. Sorry, there's no Charles Bronson here! (CD)**-Cain**

V/A "Organized Crime/Lifeline Records" (*Organized Crime, POB 213, Brookfield, IL 60513/Lifeline, POB 692, Midlothian, IL 60445*). This here CD is a compilation of modern Thrash/Hardcore bands, most of them having something to do with Organized Crime Records or Lifeline Records. The only band I'm familiar with is Kill Your Idols, though most of the bands seem to have a Straight Edge mentality. xDISCIPLEx AD has the audacity to proclaim, "You're walking in the swordpath of the vengeance of God." Blow me—this beer's for you. Overall, this collection isn't too bad as the bands aren't your typical poorly played Slayer knockoffs. The preaching is incredibly irritating, though, and some of these bands really need to put a sock in it. (CD)**-chuck.foster**

V/A "Sex and Subversion: A Thick Records Document" *(Thick, POB 351899, Los Angeles, CA 90035)*. Diversity and independent thought go hand in hand, and Thick Records proves it to the fullest extent with this perfectly constructed compilation. *Sex & Subversion* is a sonically eclectic whirlwind of aggressive and melodically pleasing Alt-Rock, Grunge, Punk, freakoid Butthole Surfers-style Ska-noise (compliments of the Blue Meanies), frenzied Irish Folk rants (The Tossers), spastic herky-jerky New Wave (New Black), dazzling Power Pop playfulness, and so much more. There's 17 truly vibrant and unique tracks total by as many bands (including Sullen, Local H, The Methadones, The GC5, The Arrivals, and Bitchy). *Sex and Subversion* is an engaging earful of aural brilliance from start to finish, a pleasurable musical experience of many colors unlike any other. (CD)**-Moser**

V/A "This Is Indie Rock :The Best Bands You've Never Heard Of :Volume One" *(Deep Elm, POB 36939, Charlotte, NC 28236)*. This Deep Elm comp is hit or miss, but it's a great concept. Bands send in their demos, and some wind up on this comp series. (CD)**-Mr Noiz**

V/A Fax Arcana / The Disease "We, the Bankrupt" *(Alone, POB 3019, Oswego, NY 13126)*. First and foremost, I'd like to note the sound clip on the Disease side of this split EP. "I'm champagne, and you're shit!" That's without a doubt the best movie quote, ever. Each band splits four songs equally, although their styles are different in nature. Fax Arcana plays what they call Rustbelt-Blues-Core. It's a different, more fresh sound than what you've been hearing lately. The instruments are rhythmically blended together, close to perfection. The Disease, on the other hand, is a faster, more abrasive outfit. They present themselves electronically and artistically. Also, the vocalists screams rather than wails. This split provides an accurate taste of each. (CD)**-Cain**

V/A Maserati / Cinemechanica / We Versus the Shark *(Hello Sir, 201 Pittard Rd, Winterville, GA 30683)*. This CD is a triple-split release showcasing the talents of three Athens, Georgia based Art Rock bands. Maserati offer two complex atmospheric instrumental compositions that would make a great soundtrack to an Art Film. The next two tracks are by Cinemechanica, who are very much a Math Rock band—jarringly complicated, but not so much that you lose interest. As for the final two cuts by We Versus the Shark, well, they're right up my alley playing noisy disjointed Post Punk—the real thing, not this watered-down Franz Ferdinand crap. The moral of the story is: There's more to Athens than REM and the B-52s. (CD)**-chuck.foster**

Vader "The Beast" *(Metal Blade, 2828 Cochran St. #302, Simi Valley, CA 93065)*. This could be the best album that Vader has released this year, with no exaggeration. Vader is one of those bands that keeps getting better and better. They've had a horrible year as a band with accidents and cancelled tours; perhaps that has led to the pure, ferocious tone of this album. This is blinding Death Metal of epic proportions that easily raises the bar to a new level; Vader has surpassed contemporaries like Morbid Angel and Deicide. New drummer Daray stepped right in and laid down a barrage of beats that are hard to **comprehend**, never mind play. Novy, formerly of Behemoth, lays down a destructive bass sound on this recording that well proves his worth, while Peter continues to be the driving force behind this monster. I can't emphasize how important the Polish scene has become in Metal, and this is the crown jewel of that collective. A must own album. (CD)**-Myk**

Wally Pleasant "Music For Nerds and Perverts" *(www.spatrecords.com)*. The title of this musically bizarre release says it all, by gosh. Wally Pleasant good-naturedly rolls out 14 nerdy and perverse ditties that utterly defy categorization. The general content is quirky, acoustic, and absurdly whimsical. The more I listen to Mr. Pleasant's zany and warped melody musings, the more I'm reminded of the hilarious oddball roadie song "I Wanna Job" from the tour bus scene in the *Sid and Nancy* movie. If there's such a genre as comedic Folk, then this is a laughter-inspiring representation of such things. And "Hey Georgie" is the funniest damn anti-Bush song I've yet heard. Though I'm not normally prone to lend my ears to a quasi-retarded release like *Music For Nerds and Perverts*, it makes me broadly grin and sheepishly chuckle nonetheless, so I'm keeping it close to my heart even if it ain't necessarily the "coolest" disc ever to slide into my CD changer. We all gotta be nerds sometime, I guess. (CD)**-Moser**

The Warriors "War Is Hell" *(Eulogy, POB 24913, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307)*. Eulogy continues to put out compelling Hardcore records. The Warriors have all the hooks of an '80's Hardcore band like the Cro-Mags and Sick Of It All, but also include a bit of a newer sound with elements from early Hydra Head releases, and they have a vocalist who reminds me of Thom from Indecision. This album really cranks it up from the very first note and just never stops. It has all of the finger-pointing goodness of a Straight Edge band and all the breakdowns of Sheer Terror. This will hit really fast and hard with the Most Precious Blood fans, and anyone else who still thinks the old school has something positive to offer. (CD)**-Myk**

The Youngs *(Web of Mimicry, www.webofmimicry.com)*. This is a dark, atmospheric album of lonely minimalist ballads. The various influences I hear are so diverse and so widespread, I can't even begin to pick them apart. Imagine if the Carpenters were into psychedelic experimentation. The vocals are absolutely superb, as is the songwriting. I'll have to take some time exploring this one. (CD)**-chuck.foster**

VIDEO STUFF

MUSIC

Against Me "We're Never Going Home" *(Fat Wreck Chords, POB 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119-3690).* This is a DVD documentary of one month on tour with one of the best bands, Punk or otherwise, to come along in a very long time. Against Me possesses the kind of energy that bands such as the Clash had in their heyday. They just have "it," whatever that "it" is, and it comes across loud and clear in their repertoire of tunes, many of which are showcased here on *We're Never Going Home*. Some of the highlights of this documentary are watching the band schmooze with douchebag major label personnel, who follow the band across the country buying them lunches and dinners, almost visibly salivating at the possibility of exploiting the band for their own selfish needs. Another enjoyable moment takes place when they interview a number of crusties who go on to explain how Against Me is no better than Anti-Flag, throwing the word "sellout" around as easily as throwing a football. But for myself, the defining centerpiece of this film is without question when Against Me—while at the Asbury Park Surf n' Skate Fest—locks Taking Back Sunday in their dressing room; we hear them scratching and clawing, trying to escape. Against Me then boards Simple Plan's tour bus and raids their liquor cabinet, only to be thrown off the bus until one of them mentions that they are on Fat Wreck Chords, which apparently is like a VIP pass to those crazy Canucks in Simple Plan. Overall, this is a good way to spend an hour of your time while drinking some beers and wishing you were in a band touring the country. (DVD)**-McClernon**

Anti-Flag "Death of A Nation" *(A-F, PO B 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213).* This is Anti-Flag's first live DVD and while on the whole the formula is pretty much by the numbers, the viewer **does** get to enjoy a few surprises along the way. Broken into three categories (Live, Special Features, and Propaganda), the live portion of the disc highlights 23 songs, all of varying sound quality, taken from different legs of the band's "Terror State" tour of North America. Their choice of live cuts features tunes taken from their entire repertoire, so if you haven't liked the band since *Die for the Government*, don't fret, you'll have the opportunity to catch a couple selections off that record as well. What I appreciate about the band here is that regardless of venue—whether it's a small club or a sold-out concert hall—the energy that A-F exudes is still the same. As much as I may disagree with a number of things that Justin Sane writes about, they come off genuine here for the most part, though at times you'll witness some Rock Star posturing when Chris #2 screams something like, "Alright Detroit, when I yell 'Fuck,' everybody else scream 'You,'" or some such nonsense. Also, whether or not Justin has cut down on his whining or not, it's difficult to tell, but at least on this DVD, there's more rock and much less preaching, which is certainly a good thing. What you also get here are the "Death of A Nation," "Post-War Breakout," and "Turncoat" videos, the last one being perhaps the most radio-friendly and catchy tune the A-F has ever penned. You also get behind-the-scenes looks into the making of their videos, as well as an interview with the band. All in all, this is a worthwhile purchase, and if you're a fan of the band who maybe hasn't seen these political punkers live yet, this might just whet your appetite for the next time they come to your town. While I prefer the documentary style of the Against Me DVD better than A-F's straightforward approach, you certainly get more than what you pay for here. (DVD)**-McClernon**

Antiseen "The 20 Year Anniversary Show" *(TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave.. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646).* Hot damn unholy hell! TKO is now debuting their very first DVD, and it's one heck of a visually stunning spectacle indeed if'n I do say so myself. Antiseen caught live by six different cameras during their monstrous 34-song, 20-year anniversary set in Charlotte, North Carolina, April 2003. It's a wrathful and celebratory carnival of carnage, coagulation, and screaming destructo scum havoc. It ain't pretty, and it ain't some sort of thought-provoking artistic statement to be glorified at Cannes, but it's definitely an entertaining, eye-opening experience to behold. Past and present members of the rough and rowdy Antiseen collective participate in this madly festive, free-for-all feast of frenzied, noise-mongering delights. There's blood, burly grit, and loudness galore, so be prepared to cower in the corner like a cold, wet puppy dog with a lopped-off wiener. Best if viewed while heartily ingesting a succulent Southern-style meal of cornbread, venison chili, and sourmash whiskey. (DVD)**-Moser**

Devo "Live In the Land of the Rising Sun" *(Music Video Distributors, POB 280, Oaks, PA 19456).* This has been a great year for Devo fans, with three DVDs released. The first was the out of print laser disc finally, even though they fucked that up by omitting the Jimi Hendrix cover video because of legal issues. The second was the live performance from Irvine Meadows in 1996, and now we have a live performance from Japan. If you've seen the Irvine show, you know that the band was as Devo as ever, but the total package and quality of that release was a little lacking from Rhino's end. There was little in the way of bonuses, weak packaging, and virtually no promotion for it. This, on the other hand, is done with a lot of love. The video quality is superb. The sound is amazing. The time and effort taken to intersplice interview bits in between just about every song was well-calculated and edited. The raving Japanese fanbase made it all the more impressive as they screamed, danced and sang along. It is exactly what every band wants for every show they ever play. The bonus pieces are good as well; Devo getting interviewed in a subway amidst a packed train, backstage interviews with Jerry and Mark, an excellent interview with David Kendrick about his position in the band, footage of an odd television appearance the band did, and last but not least, a gem from the Target Video vault from 1981. This is a much better live release than what Rhino managed to sling into the market. Here you find the difference between people who work with bands because they love them and people who work with bands to make money off them. This performance really conveys the fact that even after 25 years, they still are D-E-V-O. (DVD)**-Myk**

The Exploited "Beat 'Em All" *(Music Video Distributors, POB 280, Oaks, PA 19456).* The Exploited has only one original member left. Wattie, the braided-mohawk-wearing anarchist who's has become a living embodiment of Chaos Punk really **is** the Exploited. The band played the Metalmania show in Poland in 2003 in front of 3000 people and let rip with 19 tracks spanning their whole career. Over the years, The Exploited has taken on a more metallic feel, probably as much a sign of the times as it is a switch in the membership, but managed to really deliver on the classics at this show. Songs like "Fuck the System," "Dogs of War," "Let's Start A War," "Sex and Violence" and "Punk's Not Dead" all drive the crowd into a frenzy as they have for some 20 years now. But the newer songs has an interesting effect as well; it was during these songs that the Metal crowd of Poland really stepped in and embraced the band. It turned into a really well-received performance even though the crowd was originally aloof. Wattie is still quite the showman and his voice has held up well over the years. The professional multi-camera shoot is exceptional, and the sound is great. If you're a fan of music DVDs, you won't be disappointed here as this is a high quality release. (DVD)**-Myk**

Slayer "Still Reigning" *(Universal, 825 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10019).* FUCKING SLAYER! Okay, that's the first thing you hear every time you see Slayer live. It also is one of the best quotes from the new DVD released this November. In the bonus material, the band is interviewed and they candidly discuss how Slayer fans can't just say "Slayer"—they have to yell it. This is one of the best backstage pieces the band has done in ages. It also gives some good insight into Dave Lombardo's history with the band, including his departure and rejoining in the recent past. Also, in the bonus footage are six tracks **not** from the *Reign In Blood* album, which is the real focus of this release. The best Thrash album of all time is preformed start to finish, and with between song banter it rings in at 31 minutes. It's perfect, as always, and the band is purely devastating. The multi-camera shoot on this performance is far superior to the NFL Films version from *Live Intrusion*. Slayer is more a force of nature at this point than a Metal band. The real highlight though is the introduction of the "Wall of Blood." Hundreds of gallons of theatrical stage blood are forced through a sprinkler system onto the stage and band during the finale, which of course was the track "Raining Blood." The band doesn't need to be more over the top; they proved a long time ago they **are** the top. No fan of Slayer can do without this. Even audiophiles have to recognize the unreleased recording that makes up this performance. Like there is a Slayer release you can do without anyway? (DVD)**-Myk**

V/A "Peepshow III: A Compilation of Videos, Interviews, and Idiocy!" *(Fat Wreck Chords, POB 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119).* There's nothing like watching a bunch of bands I can't stand and don't care about posing in music videos interspersed with dull home movies that are supposed to be witty. As far as I'm concerned, NOFX and Fat Wreck Chords are responsible for the crap that passes for Punk Rock on MTV, i.e., Yellowcard, Simple Plan, Good Charlotte, Blink 182, etc. Watching them and bands of their ilk only reminds me of why I hate them so much. Even the Subhumans segment is disappointing—a live version of "New Age" from *The Day the Country Died*, my least favorite Subhumans album. You can't please everybody. (DVD)**-chuck.foster**

V/A "Punk Rock Holocaust" *(Springman, POB 2043, Cupertino, CA 95015).* When I first received this, I thought it was another typical Punk Rock video comp. It has a giant "Van's Warped Tour" logo on the back and the art depicts some wacky looking Ninja character on top of a bunch of dead and bloody punk rockers in cartoon form. Like I said, this is typical comp packaging, but if you come across this, take the time to read the description of the video on the back. It turns out this is a full-on movie, filmed on the 2003 Warped Tour, that features a huge collection of the bands that performed on that tour. The story is this: a murderer is stalking the bands and fans of the Warped Tour, and attacks at every city. Kevin Lyman (founder of the tour) is trying desperately to keep the tour going no matter what happens. This includes taking surviving members of Simple Plan and the Used and having them perform together. The film was written, produced and directed by Doug Sakmann, an alumnus of Troma; coincidently, the role of Satan is played by none other than Lloyd Kaufman, the founder of Troma. The majority of the cast are the actual production crew members of the Warped Tour including their accountant, publicist, reporter and several once-viewed office workers. Bands that are slaughtered during this Toxic Avenger-style splatterfest include Simple Plan, The Used, Me First and the Gimme Gimmes, HorrorPops, Andrew WK, Pennywise and a band I am non familiar with called the Phenomenauts (who remind me of Man or Astroman?). There are tons of cameos by too many bands to mention. The murder scenes, of course, are all ultra-bloody and totally unrealistic, but are amazingly fun. There's one scene where a group of cooks are feeding the slaughtered kids to the remaining band members at the nightly barbecue. The humor kicks in when someone asks for a vegan burger and they pick up a Straight Edge kid and say, "This one is vegan". Being a big fan of Troma, this film is a whole lot of fun. Not being a fan of the overly poppy Punk Rock that has dominated recent Warped Tours made this all the funnier. I am glad to see these bands have a sense of humor though, and that they got together to make this happen. There are two audio commentaries on this disc, a serious one and a drunken one (this can only be accessed in a computer). The film also features live performances all that are exclusive to this film since they were actually filmed on the tour. If nothing else, this is a much more fun video compilation to watch, if not just a very satirical Punk Rock film. (DVD)-**Myk**

V/A "Trustkill Video Assault" *(Trustkill, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724).* This is a collection that's been a long time coming. It features 12 videos from Trustkill's biggest bands, each introduced by label owner Josh Grabelle. It's kind of fun to hear some of the background and stories behind the video making from a non-professional; you get the story from someone who observes without necessarily telling you about apature, film speed, and camera lenses, as you do with many audio commentaries. The disc, as a bonus feature, has previews of the *Hellfest* 2002 and 2003 DVD releases, as well as the *New England Hardcore and Metalfest* DVD that was released earlier this year. The bands represented include Poison the Well, Armsbendback, Hopesfall, Open Hand, Nora, Throwdown, Most Precious Blood, Roses Are Red, and there are two videos each from Eighteen Visions Bleeding Through (who steal the DVD). There is a wide range of videos and styles, and clocking in at about an hour, this is one of the better straight in your face DVD comps released to date. (DVD)-**Myk**

OTHER COOL STUFF

"Birdy the Mighty: Double Trouble / Final Force" *(Central Park Media, 250 W. 57th St, Suite 317, New York, NY 10107).* This is two separate DVDs that contain four continuous episodes of the *Birdy* saga. These both can be found in the *Creator Spotlight: Kawajiri Brick Pack* box set with *Demon City Shinjuku* and *A Wind Named Amnesia*. Birdy is a galactic police officer. She is on Earth to fight Hazumi, a soulless character hell-bent on taking over the planet even if she has to kill everyone in her way. Birdy accidentally kills Tsutomu, a human, who happens to get in the way when she is fighting an alien henchman. The Galactic Counsel forces Birdy to merge her body with the dead human to rectify the error above all errors and return him to life. The thing is, only one can occupy real space at a time and they constantly fight each other for control. It's really starting to grate on Tsutomu's girlfriend, especially after she catches Birdy transforming into Tsutomu. It is always hard to explain to your significant other that you share a body with a scantily clad woman who has super powers. The character relationship is similar to that of the Firestorm comic from DC Comics, who can only be controlled by one of the two people, but the other can be heard like "the voices." In *Final Force*, Birdy and Tsutomu are starting to get a little more comfortable with the situation, and they're forced to go after an Earth Scientist who has gone berserk and is trying to infect a large part of the population with a biogenetic compound in the water supply. How does all of this tie into Birdy's original mission? How is it going to happen and what happens if they don't succeed in stopping it? Not to mention, who is the guy in the suit and sunglasses? The creator of this conundrum also worked on the *AniMatrix*, *Vampire Hunter D* and *Ninja Scroll*. It will appeal to fans of *Patlabour* and *Bubblegum Crisis* and is full of great fight scenes and other action. This brick pack is available for under $30 and contains four DVDs, and you can't beat that or the other four such director sets from US Manga. (DVD)-**Myk**

"Cheerleader Camp" *(Anchor Bay, 1699 Stutz Dr., Troy, MI 48084).* Oh boy, are you in for a treat when you watch a film starring Leif Garrett! No shit, the real deal, Leif Garrett, the has been teen star. Now he is reduced to trying to be the male member of a cheerleading squad of hot girls that are obviously way younger than him. But let's talk about the star of this film, Teri Weigel, who gets topless in this film and basically has a "whose breasts are better" competition with Penthouse Pet Krista Pflanzer, just prior to Weigel going off and becoming a blazing porn star. Let's not forget, for all you punk rockers out there, that this film was directed by John Quinn and produced by Jeff Prettyman, who both had major roles in the releasing of *The Decline of Western Civilization*. The lead role of the film is filled by Betsy Russell and also features Lucinda Dickey, who was in *Grease 2* and both *Breakin'* films. The film is your basic gratuitous everything film. You have lots of amazingly hot women. Lots of kills. Lots of guts, and the entire film is basically set up as nerd's wet dream. Cory (Dickey) reminds me of Joe from *Facts of Life* in a major way, except Cory acts in a film the way you wish Joe would have every once in a while. Alison (Russell) is the star cheerleader, but she is having trouble sleeping, and to make matters worse, someone is killing everyone around her. Her friends, her competition, and even her boyfriend all end up dead. Who would do this to her, and why? What is going on at Cheerleader Camp, when the body of a dead counselor is being stored in a freezer and the director is sleeping with the local sheriff? This movie is full of these elements, they've managed to make it fun to watch. It's films like this that once made *Night Flight* a great show to watch. The disc has the usual barrage of extras like trailers, photos, and poster and still galleries, but also include in this is an alternate title sequence that was cut from the film. (DVD)-**Myk**

"Creepshow 2" *(Anchor Bay, 1699 Stutz Dr., Troy, MI 48084).* This is the second version of the film released by Anchor Bay. The last DVD release came out in 2002, and was just the film with little extra in the bonus department. This version has been souped up, and is a much more desirable package. To begin with, the film has been re-mastered using the Divi-Max format, a process similar to the THX system. The film is presented in widescreen and is packed with a bunch of extras not previously seen. The most impressive extra on this film is the audio commentary from director Michael Gornick, who is one of the most well-spoken people you're ever likely to come across. In addition, Gornick also happens to have an immense amount of film knowledge in general, and when relating it to his own work, provides one of the most fascinating behind the scenes looks I have ever heard presented in a commentary. There is also a documentary found in the special features section that interviews Howard Berger and Greg Nicotero, the special effects gurus who made *Creepshow 2* come to life. Past that you find you typical trailers, photo galleries and storyboards. For those not familiar with *Creepshow 2*, the film is the sequel to the fabulous effort put together by Stephen King and George Romero. Like its predecessor, this film is an anthology of short horror films, but original to this version is the animated segue between every story that builds a fourth overall situation. The film features George Kennedy and Dorothy Lamour together in the "Old Chief Woodenhead" short about an Indian tribe and a small local town that is locked in an endless struggle of poverty and the dependence on "the white man." The second tale, "The Raft," features everyone's favorite college-aged clan of kids that end up in the woods by a lake with a bag of grass and something that just isn't right. Not to mention, the two girls in this segment are pretty blazing hot, a total horror no no. The final short is called "The Hitcher" and features a twisted view of the lifestyles of the rich and selfish. If you get naked in horror films, you die. If you cheat on your husband in that same film, you get a whole lot worse. The animated story that connects all of the shorts is about a neighborhood kid, who is a little geeky and abused by the neighborhood bully. The short is graced by none other than special effects guru Tom Savini in the role of the Creep. While I won't try and tell you this film lives up to the status of the original, it's still a lot of fun. These stories are the rejects from the first go around, so they are the seconds. But even with that being the writing situation, I'll still take this over films like *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. This is real horror comedy and it is evil fun. (DVD)-**Myk**

"Demon City Shinjuku" *(US Manga/Central Park Media, 250 W. 57th St., Suite 317, New York, NY 10107).* Another film from the Yoshiaki Kawajiri video block, but *Demon City Shinjuku* can also be purchased separately. This film is the most spiritual of the films in the boxed collection. Much like the film *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust* (also by Kawajiri) the film deals with more traditional evil characters. The story starts with a sword fight between two warriors battling to the death. The victor is Rah, who has been imbued with demon power and is transforming the Shinjuku section of Japan into a demon city. The full transformation will take 10 years. Fast forward those 10 years and you meet Kyoya, the son of the slain samurai. He holds much power but is unaware of his potential until he is visited by his father's former sensei. He is sent to Shinjuku to slay Rah before he can complete the final sacrifice and open the door for demons to enter the world. Kyoya picks up a few friends along the way, and also gets an understanding of the full range of his own powers. He fights through demons and zombies to finally find Rah for the final battle. The action of this film is high quality and often. The animation is top notch, and avoids the tendency to become over-exaggerated-bordering-on-goofy, as many Manga films do. This is by far the best film of the box set, and possibly Kawajiri's best work next to *Ninja Scroll*. The inclusion of demons, zombies, magic, a love interest and apocalyptic cities make this a complete and well-rounded story that will hold together for years to come. Fans of Trigun and Akira should really enjoy this, as well as fans of Hideshi Hino and other Manga masters from Japan. (DVD)-**Myk**

"The Hillside Strangler" *(Tartan Video, www.tartanvideo.com).* The film is based on the real life case of the same name from the '70s. Kenny ©. Thomas Howell) has failed at life. He lives at home with his mother on the East Coast, and wants nothing more than to be a cop. Time and time again he's been rejected from the force, and is having a hard time eeking through the day. His mother suggests that he go to LA and spend some time with his cousin Angelo (Nicholas Turturro). Angelo turns out not to be the best influence for a down on his luck type of guy. He is involved in prostitution, drugs, gambling and who knows what else his auto detailing is a front for. While still trying to get on to the police force, Kenny is sucked into this dejected world and becomes an instant junky for all aspects of this lifestyle. That is, until he meets his wife to be. Things are going great for Kenny, including the revelation he is going to be a father—until Kenny and Angelo try to start their own prostitution ring. One things leads to another, and Kenny ends up killing a woman. Pure chaos erupts from this point on. All else goes by the wayside and the couple's true addiction—murder—sets in. The film has a grainy feel to it that is as gritty as the subject matter, and also features Lin Shaye who was in *Detroit Rock City*. Howell and Turturro are excellent in this, their performances are worth seeing alone. The film is disturbing, but more so because this is real-life horror, and as they say, truth is much stranger than fiction. You would think someone who wrote this kind of story is twisted. Well, the real people who wrote this **are** twisted. A definite must for anyone interested in serial killers or real crime drama. (DVD)-**Myk**

"Ichi the Killer: Episode Zero" *(Central Park Media, 250 W. 57th St., Suite 317, New York, NY 10107)*. The film *Ichi the Killer* has gained tons of attention since Quentin Tarantino listed it as a large influence in the making of the *Kill Bill* movies. I'll admit it was one of the first films to actually make me squirm in a very long time. The ultra-violence is just leaps and bounds more horrifying than anything we have seen here in the States. But with that kind of attention, it only makes sense that there is some kind of sequel or follow up to capitalize on the recent fame. Here comes an animated piece about Ichi that actually happens prior to the live action film. This isn't exactly an origin piece, but it does take the viewer close to the beginning of the creation of the psychotic, crying killer. For those who haven't seen Ichi, he cries as he slaughters his opponents. The violence depicted in the anime doesn't even come close to the violence of the live action. Maybe it's because it's anime, but I didn't feel disturbed watching it; seeing Kakihara do the sadomasochistic wounding in a live action film was truly horrific. What the anime does well is explore more thoroughly the psychosis that Ichi feels towards the loss of his parents, and how he has been unwittingly turned into a one man killing machine. This is a far better animated venture than the like of *The Animatrix*, and it's definitely more essential to the story line of the character. In sequence though, I would still see *Ichi the Killer* before venturing to see *Episode 0*, because it still seems to make more sense that way, as a flashback. This is a rental for sure, and the diehards won't be disappointed with a purchase. The disc lacks a bit in the bonus features department, though. (DVD)-**Myk**

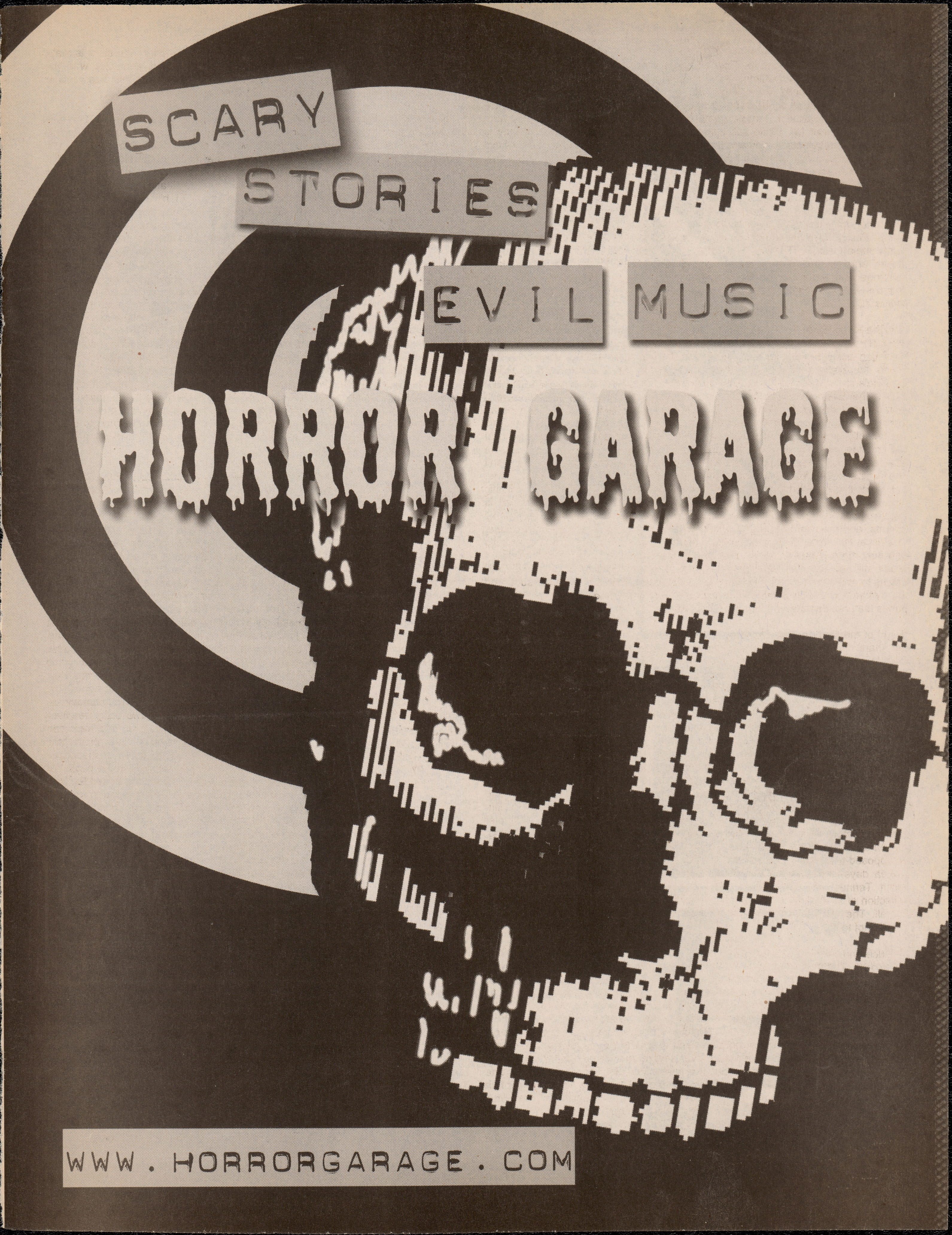
"Night of the Demons" *(Anchor Bay, 1699 Stutz Dr., Troy, MI 48084)*. I've had my fair share of crushes growing up; every red-blooded male has. But there was a point that it would dictate the very movies I would see, even if I had no interest in the movie itself. One such crush was on Linnea Quigley; after seeing her in *Return of the Living Dead* dancing naked on a tombstone when I was like 15, I was hooked. One of her more classic roles comes in the Kevin Tenney directed flick, *Night of the Demons*. A sex bomb of a teenager, Quigley gets possessed at a party in an abandoned mortuary, along with her friend Angela (Mimi Kinkade). The classic scene from this film is Quigley forcing a tube of lipstick into her own breast. The effect was great and original. Steve Johnson did the effects (and later married Linnea after meeting her on this film) before going on to do *Species*. The film also stars Cathy Podewell, who unfortunately doesn't get naked (with the exception of a quick butt shot), but keeping her clothes on was probably the best decision she ever made, as she went on to spend about five years on the show *Dallas*. This film is not dissimilar from the plotline from *House On Haunted Hill*, but has a campier feel and is more effects-heavy. There is also a little more diversity with the casting, as you have the goths, metalheads, jocks, cheerleaders and oddballs in the mix, as opposed to a seemingly "normal" collection of people. I look back fondly on my Linnea days, and this DVD definitely helps with a great audio commentary by Kevin Tenney and crew (the same guys who recorded *Witchboard*), a big collection of stills, posters, trailers and a new behind the scenes with Miss Linnea herself. The widescreen presentation is beautiful, and the film is just plain fun. What's not to like? (DVD)-**Myk**

"Seduce and Swindle" *(Asian Pulp Cinema, 250 W 57th St., Suite 317, New York, NY 10107)*. There all sorts of levels for con men. You find them on the streets with a couple of cards or some cups and a marble. You find them in big business and in the stock market. They will mercilessly bilk you for all you're worth, but that is nothing compared to Fujisawa. Not only will he steal money. He steals it from the most beautiful and rich women all over Japan. To add insult to injury, he gets them to give it to him, and he gets them to sleep with him. He gets it all and leaves his victims with nothing; no money, no pride, and they won't press charges no matter what the cops do. The film takes place over several months and follows Fujisawa through three such relationships, but the interesting plot line of the film is the confrontation with the police. They know he's done it. They have all but caught him red handed, but in every case the women refuse to press charges. In a last ditch effort to stop him, the police hire a former "love con man" to combat him for the love of a senator. Will youth and beauty win, or experience and wit? This film lacks the action that I've found in most Asian Pulp releases, but it still features the beautiful women that have become associated with the imprint. The story is really well-written and fairly compelling. The only thing I found annoying was the portrayal of the police sergeant; he was buffoonish at best, but this was a minor detail in an otherwise enjoyable film. (DVD)-**Myk**

"Step Sister" *(Anime 18, 250 W 57th St., Suite 328, New York, NY 10107)*. This is the second film I've seen featuring the concept of a young man lusting after his members of his step family. The first I saw was entitled *Stepmother's Sin* and it only involved seducing the young attractive mother figure of the story. In this film, part of the Anime 18 *Xtreme Series*; the carnal carnage also extends to the young virginal stepsister. Kyosuke is left all of his father's art after his death, but his stepmother, who runs an art gallery, is intervening in his future plans for his father's works. This includes not listing one painting in his father's publicity book. When Kyosuke confronts Yuna, she offers up her daughter to do anything Kyosuke can think of, just to let the issue pass. At first he hesitates, but then embarks on deflowering his younger step-sister who wants nothing more than her family to stay together and is willing to do anything to make that happen. In classic *Xtreme Series* fashion, the erotic scenes are pushed to the limit making the viewer at times feel uncomfortable with what they're seeing. It is erotica, but the subject matter could make you feel angry. Of course, that's only the beginning, and things get more twisted from there, in both plot and sex. Once again, this series features some of the best animation you'll find in any anime release. The art is crisp and the females are very seductive. The artist's grasp of the female forms are second to none in any genre. The story is well-constructed and it does derive a psychological response from the viewer. I'm sure there are some real-life issues brought up here—people who have secret desires about a stepsister or stepmother—and perhaps this is a good way to relieve those tensions. Perhaps it is a good way to keep someone from doing something they or someone else would regret, but there is no denying the moral situation the viewer is put in at the end, trying to decide whether what they watched was acceptable or not. It's thought-provoking, a sign of quality filmmaking. (DVD)-**Myk**

V/A "Drive In Double Feature: The Pit / Hellgate" *(Anchor Bay, 1699 Stutz Dr., Troy, MI 48084)*. This is an ongoing series of two movies on one disc. Some of the collections are essential, some have a good movie and one you never heard of, or in this case, two films even I never heard of. The first film is *The Pit*, from 1981. It features absolutely no one you have ever heard of, and boasts effects that make *CHUD* look like *T2*. The story is about a disturbed little boy who hears his teddy bear talking to him, whom as well causes all kinds of problems for the neighborhood kids and his parents. While his parents are away on an extended trip, Jamie (Sammy Snyder) gets a baby sitter, Sandy (Jeannie Elias), who is very understanding of the disturbed child. In an effort to get close to his twenty-something babysitter, Jamie tells Sandy about a little secret he has. There is a hidden pit in the woods, and something's in it. If the neighbors thought Jamie was disturbed before, they have no idea what they're in store for. More importantly, what can Sandy do to stop him, since she is the only person he likes, including his parents? The second film of the collection is the superior of the two, featuring the awesome star power of Arnold Horshack himself, Ron Palillo. Let's put it this way: compared to the way that most the *Kotter* cast's careers went, Palillo comes out looking like Olivier. The film is directed by William Levey, who did such stunners as *The Happy Hooker Goes to Washington* and *Blackenstein*. The story revolves around a mock ghost town and its owner, whose daughter is killed in a tragic car crash. In a fit of vengeance, all who occupy the town have become ghosts and ghouls who haunt the place some 20 years later and try to snare unsuspecting passers by. Matt (Palillo) and his little group have unknowingly rented a cabin not far from the ghost town, and a wrong turn has put them smack in the middle. Matt is seduced by the long dead Josie and she spends the entire film trying to reel him in. I had a lot of fun watching these....bad '80's productions that reminded me of being in high school and watching films like these on USA *Up All Night*. But, these films haven't gotten any better, and without an overwhelming amount of beer and friends around, these are hard to watch. Put two together, and you have a disc you just don't need in your collection—not even for the comedic value of showing your friends what level you've stooped to. (DVD)-**Myk**

"Witchboard" *(Anchor Bay, 1699 Stutz Dr., Troy, MI 48084)*. The '80s, what a great time for horror! You could always count on good slashers, continually improving effects and hot naked women. No woman better embodies this than Metal video legend Tawny Kitaen. She was hot as sin and she gets naked in this. Add to that a soap opera star in Stephen Nicols (Patch from *General Hospital*) and the Ouija board craze, and you have the makings for a Cinemax legend. At a party with Linda (Kitaen) and her boyfriend (Todd Allen) a Ouija board makes an appearance. Linda and ex-boyfriend (Nicols) call up a spirit for fun and Linda becomes hooked. She ends up playing with the board herself after it is left at her house. Is she strong enough to handle the spirits she has conjured all by herself? Is the spirit good or evil, and what of Linda's new found pregnancy? Not to mention Linda's current and ex-boyfriend are fighting over her, and they used to be best friends. Something is wrong, but what, and with who? It's a race against the clock and the supernatural. The DVD features an audio commentary with director Kevin Tenney (who also directed *Night of the Demons*), executive producer Walter Josten and producer Jeff Geoffray. Also included on the disc, as bonuses, are the trailer, a "making of," and some television ads. The film is presented in widescreen and comes with a cool insert card with a cutout of the Ouija board with the chapter listings. I loved this film as a kid, and it's still fun to watch now. (DVD)-**Myk**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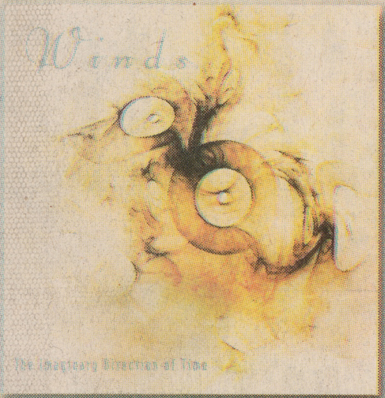
Dark tales for the modern age ....

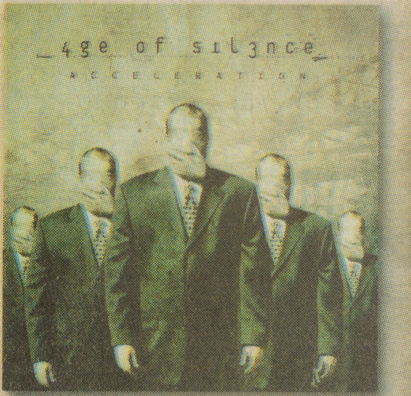
CRISIS
Like Sheep Led To Slaughter

CRISIS "Like Sheep Led To Slaughter"
CRISIS manage to once again offer another true original full of head-spinning songwriting complexity. Fully showcasing the band's (dis)harmonic balance of dark art metal and experimental hardcore the music implores relentless waves of primal energy and unmitigated brutality! The result is a cathartic sonic experience fully embraced by the apocalyptic lyrics of Karyn Crisis, who once again, delivers an impressive array of contrasting and insanely captivating unique vocals!

The Delores Lesion
lilitu

WINDS "The Imaginary Direction Of Time"
The third album from WINDS, "The Imaginary Direction of Time," creates an uncompromising combination of classical, progressive and dark metal music with intricate sounds and harmonies. Following in the vein of the previous albums with philosophically charged lyrics, the new album takes WINDS to new heights both in the lyrical and musical field. This is without a doubt the band's most elegant album to date, with a new and added dimension of intricacy due to the increased collective effort in the compositional process.

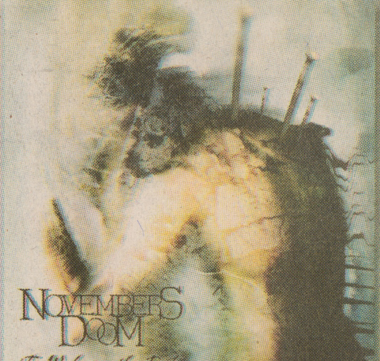

Winds
The Imaginary Direction of Time



PECCATUM "Lost In Reverie"
Third album by one of the most artistic and experimental bands from Norway. Featuring Ihsahn (Emperor) and Ihriel (Star Of Ash), "Lost In Reverie" pushes the envelope of musical crossbreeds even further. Blurring the lines of organic performances and electronics, they indulge into delightfully bizarre sonic landscapes and shed new visions of light to dark music.

SUBTERRANEAN MASQUERADE
"Temporary Psychotic State"
"Temporary Psychotic State" is a two track EP featuring over 47 minutes of classic progressive rock. Built upon layers of orchestral arrangements, psychedelic passages and rocking post rock blasting, this is a truly dynamic release that will appeal to fans of extreme metal as well to those who enjoy edgy, dark progressive rock. The release features a stunning line-up including Paul Kuhr (Novembers Doom), AVW (Agalloch), Tino LoSicco (Epoch of Unlight), a guest appearance by Andy Winter (Winds) and an ensemble of strings, keyboards and folklore female vocals.

PECCATUM
LOST IN REVERIE



LILITU "The Delores Lesion"
Third album by Lilitu. Out of Atlanta, GA they offer a mesmerizing mix of atmospheric melodic death metal with cutting guitar riffery and a variety of both raspy and emotional clean vocals. According to Terrorizer: "Dreamy, gothic-tinged atmospheres and lighter, more ethereal passages are cut throughout with short blasts of melodic dark black metal to forge a sound that is European-influenced, but not blind mimicry. Brooding male vocals predominate, but black metal-inspired rasping occasionally offsets that balance to give the compositions a little more acerbic bite."

AGE OF SILENCE "Acceleration"
The debut release of this unique Norwegian constellation features Lazare (Borknagar, Solefald) on vocals, Eikind (ex. Khold, Tulus) on bass, Hellhammer (Mayhem, Winds, Arcturus) on drums, Andy Winter (Winds) on keyboards, Extant and Kobbergaard (By Pale Light) on guitars. The music can best be described as a mix between thrash metal, progrock, psychedelic and avantgarde insanity. Lyrically Lazare takes a conceptual journey in the vein of The Matrix or Dark City mixed in with some elaborate futuristic thoughts and concepts relating to the stock market, invoices, and the rat race of human life in general.

Subterranean Masquerade
Temporary Psychotic State

NOVEMBERS DOOM
"To Welcome The Fade" (w/ bonus CD)
Re-release of one of the top doom death albums to come out of the USA. The album of this prominent band from Chicago, IL includes a bonus CD with the out of print EP "For Every Leaf That Falls", 2 live tracks and a live video of "Within My Flesh."

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